MONDAY
December 18, 2023

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
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Initial Public Offer of equity shares on the main board of BSE Limited ("BSE") and National Stock Exchange of India Limited ("NSE", and together with BSE, the "Stock Exchanges") in compliance with Chapter II of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2018, as amended ("**SEBI ICDR Regulations**").

PAPPACHAN muthoot MICROFIN

MUTHOOT MICROFIN LIMITED

(Please scan this QR code to view the Red Herring Prospectus)

Our Company was incorporated as 'Panchratna Stock and Investment Consultancy Services Private Limited' on April 6, 1992 at Mumbai, Maharashtra, India as a private limited company under the Companies Act, 1956. Thereafter, our Company was converted into a public limited company pursuant to a special resolution passed by our Shareholders on April 30, 1994 and consequently, the name of our Company was changed to 'Panchratna Stock and Investment Consultancy Services Limited'. A fresh certificate of change of name, consequent upon conversion to a public limited company was issued by the Registrar of Companies, Maharashtra at Mumbai (**"RoC"**) on June 9, 1994. Thereafter, the name of our Company was changed to 'Panchratna Securities Limited', in order to align with the object clause and activity being carried on by our Company, pursuant to a resolution passed by the Shareholders on June 11, 1994. A fresh certificate of incorporation, consequent to the change of name was granted to our Company by the RoC on June 22, 1994. The Reserve Bank of India (**"RBI"**) granted a certificate of registration dated March 18, 1998 bearing no. 13.00365 to our Company, under its erstwhile name 'Panchratna Securities Limited' for registration as an NBFC under Section 45-IA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. Subsequently, the name of our Company was changed to 'Muthoot Microfin Limited', in order to reflect the group's identity of the shareholders i.e., the Muthoot Pappachan Group and the operations of our Company, pursuant to a resolution passed by the Shareholders on October 29, 2012. A fresh certificate of incorporation, consequent to the change of name was granted to our Company by the RoC on November 6, 2012. Pursuant to a change in the objects clause of our Company, which was approved by way of special resolution dated January 21, 2013, our Company was granted a certificate of registration of the special resolution confirming alteration of object clause dated February 12, 2013. Subsequently, the RBI granted a revised certificate of registration dated March 18, 1998, reflecting the change of our Company's name to Muthoot Microfin Limited, with effect from March 25, 2015. The RBI has granted NBFC-Microfinance Institution (**"NBFC-MFI"**) status to our Company with effect from March 25, 2015, pursuant to an endorsement on our certificate of registration dated March 18, 1998. For further details in relation to the changes in the name and registered office of our Company, see *"History and Certain Corporate Matters"* on page 221 of the Red Herring Prospectus dated December 11, 2023 (**"RHP"** or **"Red Herring Prospectus"**) filed with the RoC.

Registered Office: 13th Floor, Parinee Crescenzo, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East, Mumbai - 400 051, Maharashtra, India; **Administrative Office:** 5th Floor, Muthoot Towers, M.G. Road, Ernakulam - 682 035, Kerala, India; **Tel:** +91 48 4427 7500
Website: www.muthootmicrofin.com; **Contact person:** Neethu Ajay, Company Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer; **E-mail:** info@muthootmicrofin.com; **Corporate Identity Number:** U65190MH1992PLC066228

THE PROMOTERS OF OUR COMPANY: THOMAS JOHN MUTHOOT, THOMAS MUTHOOT, THOMAS GEORGE MUTHOOT, PREETHI JOHN MUTHOOT, REMMY THOMAS, NINA GEORGE AND MUTHOOT FINCORP LIMITED

INITIAL PUBLIC OFFER OF UP TO [●] EQUITY SHARES OF FACE VALUE OF ₹ 10 EACH ("EQUITY SHARES") OF MUTHOOT MICROFIN LIMITED ("COMPANY") FOR CASH AT A PRICE OF ₹[●] PER EQUITY SHARE (INCLUDING A SHARE PREMIUM OF ₹[●] PER EQUITY SHARE) ("OFFER PRICE") AGGREGATING UP TO ₹9,600.00 MILLION COMPRISING A FRESH ISSUE OF UP TO [●] EQUITY SHARES OF FACE VALUE OF ₹ 10 EACH AGGREGATING UP TO ₹7,600.00 MILLION BY OUR COMPANY ("FRESH ISSUE") AND AN OFFER FOR SALE OF UP TO [●] EQUITY SHARES OF FACE VALUE OF ₹ 10 EACH AGGREGATING UP TO ₹2,000.00 MILLION ("OFFERED SHARES") BY THE SELLING SHAREHOLDERS.
THE OFFER INCLUDES A RESERVATION OF UP TO [●] EQUITY SHARES OF FACE VALUE OF ₹ 10 EACH, AGGREGATING UP TO ₹100.00 MILLION (CONSTITUTING UP TO [●]% OF THE POST-OFFER PAID-UP EQUITY SHARE CAPITAL), FOR SUBSCRIPTION BY ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES ("EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION"). THE OFFER LESS THE EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION IS HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE "NET OFFER". THE OFFER AND THE NET OFFER SHALL CONSTITUTE [●]% AND [●]%, RESPECTIVELY, OF THE POST-OFFER PAID-UP EQUITY SHARE CAPITAL OF OUR COMPANY.

DETAILS OF THE SELLING SHAREHOLDERS, OFFER FOR SALE AND WEIGHTED AVERAGE COST OF ACQUISITION

NAME OF THE SELLING SHAREHOLDERS	TYPE	NUMBER OF EQUITY SHARES OFFERED / AMOUNT	WEIGHTED AVERAGE COST OF ACQUISITION PER EQUITY SHARE^ (IN ₹)#^
Thomas John Muthoot	Promoter Selling Shareholder	Up to [●] Equity Shares of face value of ₹10 each aggregating to ₹163.63 million	90.91
Thomas Muthoot	Promoter Selling Shareholder	Up to [●] Equity Shares of face value of ₹10 each aggregating to ₹163.84 million	90.74
Thomas George Muthoot	Promoter Selling Shareholder	Up to [●] Equity Shares of face value of ₹10 each aggregating to ₹163.61 million	90.93
Preethi John Muthoot	Promoter Selling Shareholder	Up to [●] Equity Shares of face value of ₹10 each aggregating to ₹337.39 million	150.00
Remmy Thomas	Promoter Selling Shareholder	Up to [●] Equity Shares of face value of ₹10 each aggregating to ₹333.87 million	150.00
Nina George	Promoter Selling Shareholder	Up to [●] Equity Shares of face value of ₹10 each aggregating to ₹337.66 million	150.00
Greater Pacific Capital WIV Ltd	Investor Selling Shareholder	Up to [●] Equity Shares of face value of ₹10 each aggregating to ₹500.00 million	165.40

#Calculated on a fully diluted basis. *^As certified by Rangamani & Co., Chartered Accountants, by way of their certificate dated December 12, 2023.*

We are a microfinance institution providing micro-loans to women customers with a focus on rural regions of India.

The Offer is being made through the Book Building Process in accordance with Regulation 6(1) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations
QIB Portion: Not more than 50% of the Net Offer | Non-Institutional Portion: Not less than 15% of the Net Offer | Retail Portion: Not less than 35% of the Net Offer
Employee Reservation Portion: Up to [•] Equity Shares aggregating up to ₹ 100 Million

PRICE BAND: ₹ 277 TO ₹ 291 PER EQUITY SHARE OF FACE VALUE OF ₹10 EACH.
THE FLOOR PRICE IS 27.70 TIMES THE FACE VALUE OF THE EQUITY SHARES AND THE CAP PRICE IS 29.10 TIMES THE FACE VALUE OF THE EQUITY SHARES.
THE PRICE TO EARNINGS RATIO BASED ON DILUTED EPS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2023 FOR THE COMPANY AT THE HIGHER END OF THE PRICE BAND IS AS HIGH AS 24.96 TIMES AND AT THE LOWER END OF THE PRICE BAND IS 23.76 TIMES AS COMPARED TO THE AVERAGE INDUSTRY PEER GROUP P/E RATIO OF 94.86.
BIDS CAN BE MADE FOR A MINIMUM OF 51 EQUITY SHARES AND IN MULTIPLES OF 51 EQUITY SHARES THEREAFTER.
A DISCOUNT OF ₹14 PER EQUITY SHARE IS BEING OFFERED TO ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES BIDDING IN THE EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION

In accordance with the recommendation of Independent Directors of our Company, pursuant to their resolution dated December 12, 2023, the above provided price band is justified based on quantitative factors/ KPIs disclosed in the 'Basis for Offer Price' section of the RHP vis-a-vis the weighted average cost of acquisition ("WACA") of primary and secondary transaction(s), as applicable, disclosed in *'Basis for Offer Price'* section on pages 125 and 126 of the RHP.

In making an investment decision, potential investors must only rely on the information included in the RHP and the terms of the Offer, including the risks involved and not rely on any other external sources of information about the Offer available in any manner.

RISK TO INVESTORS

1. The microfinance industry in India faces certain risks due to the category of customers that it services, (the primary focus customer segment for our micro-loan business is women with an annual household income of up to ₹300,000) which are not generally associated with other forms of lending. As a result, we may experience increased levels of non-performing assets and related provisions and write-offs that may adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations. Our Loans written off, Collection Efficiency and Expected Credit Loss (**"ECL"**) allowance percentage is as follows:

Period	For the six months ended September 30,		For the Financial Year		
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2021
Loans written off (₹ in millions)	322.70	1,402.81	1,402.81	737.80	983.09
Collection Efficiency (%)	98.89	93.71	95.84	85.75	67.52
ECL allowance percentage (%)	2.05	2.40	2.39	4.80	6.01

2. We will not receive any proceeds from the Offer for Sale. The Selling Shareholders will receive the entire proceeds from the Offer for Sale.
3. Our business is vulnerable to interest rate risk, and volatility in interest rates could have an adverse effect on our net interest income and net interest margin, thereby affecting our results of operations. The table below sets forth our cost to income ratio for the Financial Years 2021, 2022 and 2023, and the six months ended September 30, 2022 and 2023:

Period	For the six months ended September 30,		For the Financial Year		
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2021
Cost to income ratio* (%)	46.61	53.69	51.39	65.02	64.41

**Cost to income ratio is the ratio of the aggregate of our fees and commission expenses, employee benefit expenses, operating expenses and depreciation and amortisation expense to total income net of finance cost as per our Restated Financial Statements for the relevant year/period.*

4. The Directorate of Enforcement, Ministry of Finance, Government of India (**"ED"**) has issued summons to our Managing Director directing him to provide certain information in relation to himself and our Company (in relation to a matter concerning the deposit of cash during the demonetization period). There is no assurance that the ED will not take any action against us or our Managing Director, which may adversely impact our business and operations, financial condition and reputation.
5. We derive a significant portion of our revenues from South India, and any adverse developments in the southern states of India may have an adverse effect on our business, results of operations, financial condition and cash flows. As of September 30, 2023, March 31, 2023, 2022 and 2021, 52.37%, 55.96%, 64.81% and 66.72% of our Gross Loan Portfolio was derived from our branches in South India.
6. We may not be able to sustain the significant growth in our business and relatively high profit after tax that we recorded for the Financial Year 2023 in the future. Our revenue from operations and profit after tax were as follows:

Particulars	For the Financial Year		
	2023	2022	2021
Revenue from operations (₹ in millions)	14,287.64	8,325.06	6,841.67
Profit after tax (₹ in millions)	1,638.89	473.98	70.54

7. As a non-banking financial company – microfinance institution, we are subject to periodic inspections by the Reserve Bank of India. Non-compliance with observations made by the Reserve Bank of India during these inspections could expose us to penalties and restrictions. While we have responded to such observations and addressed them, we cannot assure you that the RBI will not make similar or other observations including divergences in the future that will financially impact our business and operations.

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Kakrapar-4 reactor attains criticality

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FOREST RIGHTS ACT

An uphill task of advocacy

Much stands in the way of democratic forest governance

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INDIA GOES 1-0 UP

Arshdeep, Avesh rip through SA line-up

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CID to probe Belagavi stripping and assault case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amid the political slugfest over the stripping and assault case in Belagavi, the Karnataka government handed over the probe to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Saturday. The CID probe is likely to begin on Monday.

Multiple statutory bodies, including the National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Women (NCW), and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, apart from the High Court of Karnataka, have taken *suo motu* cognisance of the case.

The High Court, which said the victim's plight, in this case, was "worse than what Draupadi faced", had also said it was "not satisfied by the way things took place post the incident" and was unhappy over the status report of the Belagavi police.

The incident

A 42-year-old woman, belonging to a Scheduled Tribe (ST) community, was allegedly tied to an electric pole, partially stripped and assaulted after her son eloped with a girl from the same village and community.

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Nine workers killed in blast in an explosives factory near Nagpur

Three of the injured are said to be in a critical condition; explosion took place in a unit making 'boosters' used in coal mines; company makes drones and explosives for security units

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

Nine persons, six of them women, were killed and three seriously injured when a powerful blast ripped through an explosives manufacturing factory at Bazaargaon, around 60 km from Nagpur, on Sunday.

The police said the blast took place at 9 a.m. in a "cast booster" unit of Solar Industries India, which makes drones and explosives for security units. Twelve labourers were said to have been present at the unit then. Company officials said the unit produced boosters used in coal mines.

The injured are said to be in a critical condition, and the death toll could rise further, informed sources said. Local people said the tremors of the blast could be felt in nearby villages.

"The explosion took place during a sieving operation [the explosive raw material is sieved before use] in a building where boosters for use in coal mines are made. *Prima facie*, nine persons died following the explosion. The situation is under control. No labourer is currently in the building," a senior company official said.

Body blow: A view of the site of a blast at an explosives-making factory near Nagpur on Sunday. ANI

A mob of irate labourers converged near the company gate soon after the explosion, demanding an explanation from the management. Several complained about overwork, while some said they were recalled for duty after their shift.

The police later cordoned off the area.

"We have redirected our forces from other areas to the site and are closely monitoring the situation," said Harsh Poddar, Superintendent of Police, Nagpur Rural.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who hails from Nagpur, visited the accident site.

"Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has announced compensation of ₹5 lakh for the kin of each of the deceased. We are thoroughly probing the cause of the accident," Mr. Fadnavis said.

Expressing grief, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde directed the district administration and the police to follow up on the case and provide aid to the victims.

Union govt. should examine Governor's actions: Kerala CM

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Accusing Governor Arif Mohammed Khan of attempting to create maximum provocation in every issue, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Sunday that the Union government should examine the propriety of the repeated breaches of protocol by the head of the State.

> The Governor often forgets the position that he occupies now, and makes comments unbecoming of that position
>
> **PINARAYI VIJAYAN**
> Kerala Chief Minister

Mr. Vijayan was speaking to presspersons in Pathanamthitta on the sidelines of the Navakerala Sadas, a public outreach programme by the Left Democratic Front government. "Earlier, I had said that the Governor was making wilful attempts to destroy the peaceful atmosphere in Kerala. Each of his actions in the following days in a way proved it right. The Governor often forgets the position that he occupies now, and makes comments unbecoming of that position," he said.

He said the Governor's actions as the Chancellor were bound to attract protests. The Chancellor was supposed to nominate persons to the university Senate from a panel provided by the university but he chose to nominate people from a list provided by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

"The Governor says that he used his discretionary powers to make nominations to the Senate. But such powers can only be used to nominate people from the panel of names provided by the university. Can he identify and nominate people on his own? Though the panel provided by the university had people with all the necessary qualifications, the only criterion followed in the Governor's nominations was that they belong to the RSS. These actions have led to strong protests by the students," he said.

He was referring to nominations to the Senates of Kerala and Calicut universities. He said the Governor was using harsh words against protesters.

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TUSSLE OVER BANNERS
» PAGE 7

NEARBY

No wages, work for MGNREGA labourers

KALABURAGI
Rural labourers have launched a letter campaign, addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, demanding payment of pending wages and increase in the man-days. » PAGE 4

CM: Premature criticism of caste census not right

BELAGAVI
It is not proper to oppose or criticise the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey (the caste census) even before the report is public, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said in Gadag on Sunday. » PAGE 4

Launch of Seattle-Bengaluru flight postponed

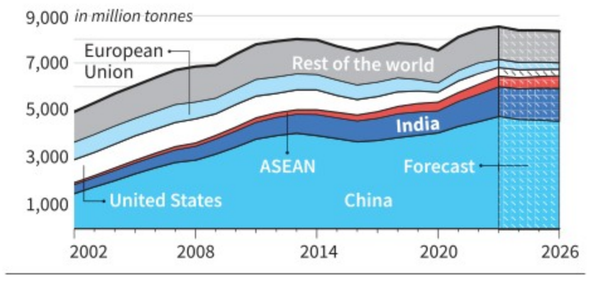
BENGALURU
Announced in early 2020, the American Airlines flight between Seattle and Bengaluru, supposed to be the first non-stop such flight, remains indefinitely postponed. » PAGE 7

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 18

Global coal demand likely to decline 2.3% by 2026: IEA

Coal consumption

Global coal consumption is expected to remain over 8 billion tonnes through 2026. The chart shows the appetite for the fuel



Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Despite production of coal reaching a record this year, global demand is expected to decline by 2026, a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) says. While the decline is expected to be due to a shift towards renewable energy and plateauing demand in China, India will remain the "driving force" for the fuel until that year.

The report, released on December 15, sees the global demand for coal rising by 1.4% in 2023, surpassing 8.5 billion tonnes for the first time. This increase, however, masks stark differences among regions. While demand in the European Union and United States is expected to drop by 20% each, it is expected to rise by 8% in India and 5% in China in 2023 due to demand for electricity and diminished generation of hydroelectric power.

The IEA's expectations of a decline in coal demand is premised also on a change in global climate. The current El Nino conditions, usually linked with a drier monsoon in Asia, are expected to turn to La Nina, which is generally linked to better rainfall, brtween 2024 and 2026. This will presumably translate to greater hydroelectric power output.

Moreover, a steep upward trend in low-cost solar photovoltaic deployment is expected to aid renewable power generation.

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Flower festival

Bright hues: Preparations are under way on the palace premises in Mysuru for the flower festival that is scheduled to be held at the end of this month. M.A. SRIRAM

Morarji Desai school staff arrested for making students clean manholes

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Three staff members, including the principal of a Morarji Desai School in Yaluvalli in Malur, Kolar, were suspended by the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS) on Sunday for making students manually clean the sanitary chambers as well as the school premises.

The Kolar district police filed a case under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and arrested the principal and a teacher of the school. In photographs that went viral, students were seen inside the manholes. The videos which are being circulated on the Internet also showed students saying that the teachers made them get inside manholes to clean them.

The Joint Director of the Social Welfare Department lodged a complaint based on which the Kolar police filed an FIR and arrested principal Bharathamma along with a teacher who was allegedly involved in the incident.

Taking to social media, Social Welfare Minister H.C. Mahadevappa said, "The principal and warden have been suspended. Henceforth, caution will be taken to ensure that such incidents do not take place."

"Apart from filing the FIR, we have also formed a committee to internally investigate the matter. The three suspended members must go through the inquiry and face disciplinary action," Naveen Kumar Raju, Executive Director, KREIS, told *The Hindu*.

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The end to a nine-year drought with the biggest win

The bigger victory for the side is the makings of a new captain-coach partnership; the longest format gave Muzumdar time with the team and an opportunity to hunt in the arena he has owned at the domestic level — red ball cricket

EMMANUAL YOGINI

Lavanya Lakshmi Narayanan

The satisfying thing about puzzles after the time it takes to find the right pieces that go together is that final step of then clicking them all into place. India's 347-run mauling of England in the one-off Test at the D.Y. Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai would have had that quality of contentment for the spectator – a performance that saw all the necessary elements come together and make that perfect 'click.'

Test cricket is an elite privilege in women's cricket, limited to the big three – Australia, England and India. Old rivals England and Australia too just get a Test every odd year thanks to the Ashes. The subcontinent last saw a Test in 2014, when India beat South Africa by an innings and 34 runs. This week, a nine-year drought was quenched with a win for India again and the biggest one in terms of runs in the women's game.

New alliances

The bigger victory for the side is the makings of a new captain-coach partnership. Veteran domestic batter Amol Muzumdar took over as head coach of the women's team starting with the England T20I series. While India lost the series 1-2, Muzumdar was unfazed and turned his focus to the Tests.

The format might be inconsequential in the current international scenario, with no championship points to claim or larger picture to work towards, but it gave him time with the team and an opportunity to hunt in the arena he has owned at the domestic level – red ball cricket.

"The coach's experience came in handy during this Test," Harmanpreet Kaur said after the win. "I did not have any red ball captaincy experience so I trusted him with key decisions like bringing Shubha Satheesh in to bat one down, or the bowling strategies. Even today, the first 40 minutes were key and he believed we should capitalise on the conditions in the morning and we did the same," she explained.

Harmanpreet has always been an aggressive captain, unafraid to employ quirky field settings and happy to attack till the very last ball. She needed a tactician who could complement this aggression and give it a zing of depth. Muzumdar's keen tuning to the longest format of the game helped him embellish a team that had the hunger with the right personnel.

"Playing Shubha was the coach's call," Harmanpreet revealed. "He saw how she batted at the NCA (during India's practice camp for the England series), how she was taking control and taking the game ahead. He believed sending her one down would give us a good start. She did it the way we expected her to as well," she added.

Muzumdar's pre-match focus areas were fitness and fielding. The Indian team barely looked hassled as it learnt on the go and the close fields, attacking lines and frugality in conceding runs ticked all the basics needed for a simple yet devastating Test match triumph.

Spinning out of control

England's tired presence over the two and a half days of Test cricket was in stark contrast to India's zeal and curiosity. The visitor looked exhausted physically and mentally as they looked out of ideas even before the first ball was bowled.

"We know Test cricket is quite difficult in that you might be out in the field and things can change very quickly. It is all about the mindset and having the ability to switch the mind on - with the bat or the ball or on the field - and be ready for the ball. There's a few tired bodies but tired minds as well," vice captain Natalie Sciver-Brunt told the media after day two. At that stage, England faced the requirement of batting at least for an entire day to have a chance to save this Test, the side's milestone 100th in the women's game. A little under three hours is all they could muster.

Skipper Heather Knight alluded to hostile conditions courtesy Navi Mumbai's quintessential heat and humidity and 'extreme spin'.

"I think the wicket probably deteriorated a bit faster than we expected. We got a few knicks that didn't carry which can be quite soul destroying for the fast bowlers, when your best ball doesn't carry to the slip. We then identified that the wobble ball was more effective and we tried to get as much out of that as we can. The pitch deteriorated but our main learning especially for the seamers was to consistently execute. Pooja (Vastrakar) was an example of that. She was tricky with her wobble ball on a good length and didn't give us too many opportunities to score," Knight said, during the postmortem of a rather underwhelming showing from the side.

"This is the first time we've bowled in a Test match in these conditions. Maybe if we had a two or three match series, we'd be able to use these lessons and get better. I guess we're pretty philosophical on what's happened around this Test match," she added.

Choices and consequences

While Knight focused on execution issues on the field, one can argue their problems stemmed from the drawing board. In a region known for its turners, England's bowling arsenal put up a four-pronged seam frontline in Kate Cross, Lauren Filer, Lauren Bell and Nat Sciver-Brunt. The entirety of spin responsibilities fell on Charlie Dean and Sophie Ecclestone, who dislocated her shoulder and had surgery three months ago.Faith remained in an underperforming Sophia Dunkley, who had a Test to forget and whose leg spin was not given an option to feature in the English resistance. One wonders if allrounder Alice Capsey, with her off spin would have been the better choice. Knight, a nifty offie herself, did not bowl herself.

"It was a hard selection to make to have the extra bowler and lose the batter at 6 and 7. There was a chance that we would have won the toss and then that bowler would have weighed in. In the first innings, I was glad to have that extra bowler. We didn't get as much bounce and carry as we thought we'd get. It was a quick pitch. Probably didn't get as much as we'd thought we'd get after batting at the edge of the square where there was more pace and bounce. Hindsight is one thing, but I don't regret that call," Knight said.

Subcontinental nightmare

England's helplessness does not bode well for the side given two ICC events coming up in the region - the T20 World Cup in Bangladesh in 2024 and the ODI World Cup in India in 2025. Poor footwork, inability to gauge and prepare for variations in turn should send the alarm clocks ringing back home. What also confounds is that this is an identified weakness that is only getting worse.

England was bowled out in both innings at Navi Mumbai with 13 out of 20 wickets falling to spin. Similar numbers emerged from Sri Lanka's tour of England and from the Women's Ashes with Ashleigh Gardner proving to be a thorn in the flesh for the English side.

"I think it's a bit of a theme for us, we want to get better. We have a big tournament in Bangladesh and we haven't been there in forever. Spin does tend to dominate in women's cricket in general so if we can improve that, it will give us an advantage. These conditions were actually quite extreme and we've not seen this kind of spin and dryness in a pitch before. In the main formats we play, we don't get as much as this," Knight suggested.

"Previously, our issues against spin have been about the ball not spinning and more about the outside edge and the like. These conditions are extreme and I'd be surprised if we face anything like this in anything other than a Test in India, she added.

THE GIST

- England batted only for 63 overs in total in this Test match
- Three Indians made Test debuts - Jemimah Rodrigues (68, 27), Shubha Satheesh (69), Renuka Singh Thakur (two wickets), no debuts for England
- This was India's first win over England on home soil and Harmanpreet Kaur's first win as Test captain in her first red ball game as skipper
- India's win was its sixth in 39 Tests, levelling it with six losses besides 27 draws in the format
- India's margin of victory is only the second instance of a 300-plus run victory in women's Tests, surpassing the previous high of a 309-run win by Sri Lanka against Pakistan in 1998

SPORTZPICS/BCCI, EMMANUAL YOGINI

...continued from previous page.

8. The market capitalization to revenue, market capitalisation to tangible assets, and enterprise value (**"EV"**) to EBITDA, based on the Offer Price of our Company, may not be indicative of the market price of our Company on listing or thereafter.

Particulars	Number of times of Cap Price (₹ 291.00)	Number of times of Floor Price (₹ 277.00)
Market capitalisation to Revenue from Operations for FY 2023	3.47 times	3.31 times
Market capitalisation to Tangible Asset for period ended September 30, 2023	2.69 times	2.56 times

Further, our EV to EBITDA ratio is 5.99 times for Financial Year 2023.

9. Weighted Average Cost of Acquisition at Floor and Cap Price

Types of transactions	Weighted average cost of acquisition (₹ per Equity Share)	Floor Price (i.e. ₹ 277.00)	Cap Price (i.e. ₹ 291.00)
WACA for Primary transactions during 18 months prior to RHP	165.40	1.67 times	1.76 times
WACA for Secondary transactions during 18 months prior to RHP	194.86	1.42 times	1.49 times

10. Weighted Average Return on Net Worth for Fiscals 2023, 2022 and 2021 is 6.35%.

11. Weighted average cost of acquisition per Equity Share transacted in one year, eighteen months and three years preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus:

Period prior to the Red Herring Prospectus	Weighted average cost of acquisition per Equity Share (in ₹)*	Cap Price is 'x' times the weighted average cost of acquisition	Range of acquisition price per Equity Share: lowest price – highest price (in ₹)*
One year	169.99	1.71	165.40-290.00
18 months	172.66	1.69	102.06-290.00
three years	172.66	1.69	102.06-290.00

As certified by Rangamani & Co., Chartered Accountants by way of their certificate dated December 12, 2023.

12. We have issued CCPS to Greater Pacific Capital WIV Ltd pursuant to allotments between December 2021 to September 2022 at a price that may be lower than the Offer Price.

13. Average cost of acquisition of Equity Shares for the Selling Shareholders are ranging from ₹90.74 to ₹165.40 and Offer Price at upper Price Band is ₹291.00.

14. The four BRLMs associated with the Offer have handled 90 public Issues in the past three financial years, out of which 25 Issues closed below the offer price on listing date :

Name of the BRLMs	Total public Issues	Issues closed below price on listing date
ICICI Securities Limited*	13	2
Axis Capital Limited*	10	2
JM Financial Limited*	13	1
SBI Capital Markets Limited*	6	3
Common Issues of above BRLMs	48	17
Total	90	25

Issues handled where there were no common BRLMs

BID/OFFER PERIOD

BID/OFFER OPENS TODAY

BID/OFFER CLOSES ON : WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2023#

 # The UPI mandate end time and date shall be at 5:00 p.m. on Bid/Offer Closing Date.

An indicative timetable in respect of the Offer is set out below:

Submission of Bids (other than Bids from Anchor Investors):

Bid/Offer Period (except the Bid/Offer Closing Date)	
Submission and Revision in Bids	Only between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. (Indian Standard Time ("IST")
Bid/Offer Closing Date*	
Submission of Electronic Applications (Online ASBA through 3-in-1 accounts) – For RIIs, other than QIBs and Non-Institutional Investors	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 5.00 p.m. IST
Submission of Electronic Applications (Bank ASBA through Online channels like Internet Banking, Mobile Banking and Syndicate UPI ASBA applications) where Bid Amount is up to ₹ 500,000	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 4.00 p.m. IST
Submission of Electronic Applications (Syndicate Non-Retail, Non-Individual Applications)	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 3.00 p.m. IST
Submission of Physical Applications (Bank ASBA)	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 1.00 p.m. IST
Submission of Physical Applications (Syndicate Non-Retail, Non-Individual Applications of QIBs and Non-Institutional Investors where Bid Amount is more than ₹ 5,00,000	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 12.00 p.m. IST
Modification/ Revision/cancellation of Bids	
Upward Revision of Bids by QIBs and Non-Institutional Investors categories#	Only between 10.00 a.m. on the Bid/Offer Opening Date and up to 5.00 p.m. IST on Bid/Offer Closing Date
Upward or downward Revision of Bids or cancellation of Bids by RIIs	Only between 10.00 a.m. on the Bid/Offer Opening Date and up to 5.00 p.m. IST on Bid/Offer Closing Date

**UPI mandate end time and date shall be at 5:00 pm on the Bid/Offer Closing Date.* *#QIBs and Non-Institutional Investors can neither revise their bids downwards nor cancel/ withdraw their Bids*

Post Offer Schedule:

Event	Indicative Date
Bid/ Offer Closing Date	Wednesday, December 20, 2023
Finalisation of Basis of Allotment with the Designated Stock Exchange	On or about Thursday, December 21, 2023
Initiation of refunds (if any, for Anchor Investors)/unblocking of funds from ASBA Account	On or about Friday, December 22, 2023
Allotment of Equity Shares/Credit of Equity Shares to dematerialized accounts of Allottees	On or about Friday, December 22, 2023
Commencement of trading of the Equity Shares on the Stock Exchanges	On or about Tuesday, December 26, 2023

ASBA# **Simple, Safe, Smart way of Application!!!**

Applications supported by blocked amount (ASBA) is a better way of applying to issues by simply blocking the fund in the bank account, For further details, check section on ASBA.

Mandatory in public issues. No cheque will be accepted.

UPI UNIFIED PAYMENTS INTERFACE

UPI-Now available in ASBA for Retail Individual Investors and Non Institutional Investor applying for amount upto ₹ 5,00,000/-, applying through Registered Brokers, DPs and RTAs. UPI Bidder also have the option to submit the application directly to the ASBA Bank (SCSBs) or to use the facility of linked online trading, demat and bank account. Investors are required to ensure that the bank account used for bidding is linked to their PAN. Bidders must ensure that their PAN is linked with Aadhaar and are in compliance with CBDT notification dated February 13, 2020 and press release dated June 25, 2021, read with press release dated September 17, 2021.

ASBA has to be availed by all the investors except anchor investors. UPI may be availed by UPI Bidders. For details on the ASBA and UPI process, please refer to the details given in ASBA form and abridged prospectus and also please refer to the section *"Offer Procedure"* on page 471 of the RHP. The process is also available on the website of Association of Investment Bankers of India ("**AIBI**") and Stock Exchanges and in the General Information Document. ASBA bid-cum-application forms can be downloaded from the websites of the Stock Exchanges and can be obtained from the list of banks that is displayed on the website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/other/OtherAction.do?doRecognisedFpi=yes&intmId=35 and https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/other/OtherAction.do?doRecognisedFpi=yes&intmId=43, respectively as updated from time to time. For the list of UPI apps and banks live on IPO, please refer to the link: www.sebi.gov.in. RIBs Bidding using the UPI mechanism may apply through the SCSBs and mobile applications whose names appear on the website of SEBI, as updated from time to time. Axis Bank Limited and ICICI Bank Limited have been appointed as Sponsor Banks for the Offer, in accordance with the requirements of the SEBI Circular dated November 1, 2018 as amended. For offer related queries, please contact the BRLMs on their respective email IDs as mentioned below. For UPI related queries, investors can contact NPCI at the toll free number: 18001201740 and mail Id: ipo.upi@npci.org.in.

THE EQUITY SHARES OF OUR COMPANY WILL GET LISTED ON MAIN BOARD PLATFORM OF BSE AND NSE

In case of any revision in the Price Band, the Bid/ Offer Period will be extended by at least three additional Working Days after such revision in the Price Band, subject to the Bid/ Offer Period not exceeding 10 Working Days. In cases of force majeure, banking strike or similar circumstances, our Company, acting through its IPO Committee in consultation with the BRLMs, in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations, may for reasons to be recorded in writing, extend the Bid/ Offer Period for a minimum of three Working Days, subject to the Bid/ Offer Period not exceeding 10 Working Days. Any revision in the Price Band and the revised Bid/ Offer Period, if applicable, shall be widely disseminated by notification to the Stock Exchanges, by issuing a public notice, and also by indicating the change on the respective websites of the BRLMs and at the terminals of the Syndicate Members and by intimation to and by intimation to Self-Certified Syndicate Banks (**"SCSBs"**), the Designated Intermediaries and the Sponsor Banks, as applicable.

This Offer is being made in terms of Rule 19(2)(b) of the SCRR read with Regulation 31 of the SEBI ICDR Regulations. The Offer is being made through the Book Building Process and is in compliance with Regulation 6(1) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations wherein in terms of Regulation 32(1) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations, not more than 50% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to Qualified Institutional Buyers (**"QIBs"**, and such portion, the **"QIB Portion"**) provided that our Company, acting through its IPO Committee in consultation with the BRLMs, may allocate up to 60% of the QIB Portion to Anchor Investors on a discretionary basis in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations (**"Anchor Investor Portion"**), of which at least one-third shall be available for allocation to domestic Mutual Funds, subject to valid Bids being received from domestic Mutual Funds at or above the Anchor Investor Allocation Price. In the event of under-subscription or non-allocation in the Anchor Investor Portion, the balance Equity Shares shall be added to the Net QIB Portion. Further, 5% of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis only to Mutual Funds and the remainder of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to all QIB Bidders (other than Anchor Investors) including Mutual Funds, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Offer Price. However, if the aggregate demand from Mutual Funds is less than 5% of the QIB Portion, the balance Equity Shares available for allocation in the Mutual Fund Portion will be added to the remaining QIB Portion for proportionate allocation to QIBs. Further, not less than 15% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation to Non-Institutional Bidders out of which (a) one-third of such portion shall be reserved for applicants with application size of more than ₹200,000 and up to ₹1,000,000; and (b) two-third of such portion shall be reserved for applicants with application size of more than ₹1,000,000, provided that the unsubscribed portion in either of such sub-categories may be allocated to applicants in the other sub-category of Non-Institutional Bidders and not less than 35% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation to Retail Individual Bidders (**"RIBs"**) in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations, subject to valid Bids being received from them at or above the Offer Price. Further, Equity Shares will be allocated on a proportionate basis to Eligible Employees applying under the Employee Reservation Portion, subject to valid Bids received from them at or above the Offer Price. All potential Bidders (except Anchor Investors) are required to mandatorily utilise the Application Supported by Blocked Amount (**"ASBA"**) process by providing details of their respective bank accounts (including UPI ID for UPI Bidders using UPI Mechanism) *(as defined hereinafter)* in which the Bid amount will be blocked by the SCSBs or the Sponsor Banks, as applicable, to participate in the Offer. Anchor Investors are not permitted to participate in the Anchor Investor Portion of the Offer through the ASBA process. For details, see *"Offer Procedure"* on page 471 of the RHP.

Bidders/ Applicants should ensure that DP ID, PAN, Client ID and UPI ID (for UPI Bidders bidding through the UPI Mechanism) are correctly filled in the Bid cum Application Form. The DP ID, PAN and Client ID provided in the Bid cum Application Form should match with the DP ID, PAN, Client ID available in the Depository database, otherwise, the Bid cum Application Form is liable to be rejected. Bidders/ Applicants should ensure that the beneficiary account provided in the Bid cum Application Form is active. Bidders/Applicants should note that on the basis of the PAN, DP ID, Client ID and UPI ID (for UPI Bidders bidding through the UPI Mechanism) as provided in the Bid cum Application Form, the Bidder/Applicant may be deemed to have authorised the Depositories to provide to the Registrar to the Offer, any requested Demographic Details of the Bidder/Applicant as available on the records of the depositories. These Demographic Details may be used, among other things, for giving Allotment Advice or unblocking of ASBA Account or for other correspondence(s) related to the Offer. Bidders/Applicants are advised to update any changes to their Demographic Details as available in the records of the Depository Participant to ensure accuracy of records. Any delay resulting from failure to update the Demographic Details would be at the Bidders'/Applicants' sole risk. Investors must ensure that their PAN is linked with Aadhaar and are in compliance with CBDT notification dated February 13, 2020 and press release dated June 25, 2021, read with press release dated September 17, 2021.

Contents of the Memorandum of Association of our Company as regards its objects: For information on the main objects of our Company, please see the section "*History and Certain Corporate Matters*" on page 221 of the RHP. The Memorandum of Association of our Company is a material document for inspection in relation to the Offer. For further details, please see the section titled **"***Material Contracts and Documents for Inspection***"** on page 495 of the RHP.

Liability of the members of our Company: Limited by shares

Amount of share capital of our Company and Capital structure: As on the date of the RHP, the authorised share capital of the Company is ₹ 2,000,000,000 divided into 200,000,000 Equity Shares of face value ₹ 10 each and 50,000,000 CCPS of face value ₹10 each. The issued, subscribed and paid-up share capital of the Company is ₹ 1,443,579,710 divided into 144,357,971 Equity Shares of face value ₹ 10 each. For details, please see the section titled "*Capital Structure*" on page 83 of the RHP.

Names of initial signatories to the Memorandum of Association of our Company and the number of Equity Shares subscribed by them: The initial signatories to the Memorandum of Association of our Company are Divyesh Pravinchandra Shah, Rajit Pravinchandra Shah, Amrish R. Daftary and Mehul Sureshbhai Sanghavi. For details of the share capital history and capital structure of our Company, please see the section titled *"Capital Structure"* on page 83 of the RHP.

Listing: The Equity Shares that will be offered through the Red Herring Prospectus are proposed to be listed on the Stock Exchanges. Our Company has received 'in-principle' approvals from BSE and NSE for the listing of the Equity Shares pursuant to their letters dated September 27, 2023 and September 28, 2023, respectively. For the purposes of the Offer, the Designated Stock Exchange shall be BSE. A copy of the Red Herring Prospectus and the Prospectus shall be filed with the RoC in accordance with Sections 26(4) and 32 of the Companies Act, 2013. For details of the material contracts and documents available for inspection from the date of the Red Herring Prospectus up to the Bid/ Offer Closing Date, see *"Material Contracts and Documents for Inspection"* on page 495 of the RHP.

Disclaimer Clause of the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI"): SEBI only gives its observations on the offer documents and this does not constitute approval of either the Offer or the specified securities or the offer document. The investors are advised to refer to page 448 of the RHP for the full text of the disclaimer clause of SEBI.

Disclaimer Clause of NSE : It is to be distinctly understood that the permission given by NSE should not in any way be deemed or construed that the Offer Document has been cleared or approved by NSE nor does it certify the correctness or completeness of any of the contents of the Offer Document. The investors are advised to refer to page 451 of the RHP for the full text of the disclaimer clause of NSE.

Disclaimer Clause of BSE (Designated Stock Exchange) : It is to be distinctly understood that the permission given by BSE should not in any way be deemed or construed that the RHP has been cleared or approved by BSE nor does it certify the correctness or completeness of any of the contents of the RHP. The investors are advised to refer to page 450 of the RHP for the full text of the disclaimer clause of BSE.

Disclaimer Clause of RBI : The Company has a valid certificate of registration dated March 18, 1998 issued by the RBI under Section 45IA of the RBI Act. Further, the Company holds a modified certificate of registration dated March 25, 2015 as an NBFC-MFI. However, the RBI does not accept any responsibility or guarantee about the present position as to the financial soundness of the Company or for the correctness of any of the statements or representation made or opinions expressed by the Company and for discharge of liability by the Company.

General Risk: Investments in equity and equity-related securities involve a degree of risk and Bidders should not invest any funds in the Offer unless they can afford to take the risk of losing their entire investment. Bidders are advised to read the risk factors carefully before taking an investment decision in the Offer. For taking an investment decision, Bidders must rely on their own examination of our Company and the Offer, including the risks involved. The Equity Shares in the Offer have neither been recommended, nor approved by SEBI, nor does SEBI guarantee the accuracy or adequacy of the contents of the Red Herring Prospectus. Specific attention of the Bidders is invited to *"Risk Factors"* on page 31 of the RHP.

BOOK RUNNING LEAD MANAGERS				REGISTRAR TO THE OFFER	Company Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer
ICICI Securities	AXIS CAPITAL	JM FINANCIAL	SBICAPS Complete Investment Banking Solutions	KFINTECH EXPERIENCE TRANSFORMATION	
ICICI Securities Limited ICICI Venture House, Appasaheb Marathe Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai - 400 025, Maharashtra, India **Tel:** +91 22 6807 7100 **E-mail:** mmflipo@icicisecurities.com **Investor grievance e-mail:** customercare@icicisecurities.com **Website:** www.icicisecurities.com **Contact Person:** Sumit Singh **SEBI Registration No.:** INM000011179	**Axis Capital Limited** 1st Floor, C-2, Axis House, Wadia International Centre P.B. Marg, Worli, Mumbai - 400 025 Maharashtra, India **Tel:** +91 22 4325 2183 **E-mail:** mmfl.ipo@axiscap.in **Investor grievance e-mail:** complaints@axiscap.in **Website:** www.axiscapital.co.in **Contact Person:** Harish Patel **SEBI Registration No.:** INM000012029	**JM Financial Limited** 7th Floor, Cnergy, Appasaheb Marathe Marg Prabhadevi, Mumbai - 400 025, Maharashtra, India **Tel:** +91 22 6630 3030 **E-mail:** muthootmicrofin.ipo@jmfl.com **Investor grievance e-mail:** grievance.ibd@jmfl.com **Website:** www.jmfl.com **Contact Person:** Prachee Dhuri **SEBI Registration No.:** INM000010361	**SBI Capital Markets Limited** 1501, 15th Floor, Parinee Crescenzo , G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400051, Maharashtra, India **Tel:** +91 22 4006 9807 **E-mail:** mml.ipo@sbicaps.com **Investor grievance e-mail:** investor.relations@sbicaps.com **Website:** www.sbicaps.com **Contact Person:** Aditya Deshpande SEBI Registration No.: INM000003531	**KFin Technologies Limited** Selenium, Tower B, Plot No. 31 and 32, Gachibowli, Financial District, Nanakramguda, Serilingampally Hyderabad - 500 032, Telangana, India **Tel:** +91 40 6716 2222 **E-mail:** muthoot.ipo@kfintech.com **Investor grievance e-mail:** einward.ris@kfintech.com **Website:** www.kfintech.com **Contact Person:** M. Murali Krishna **SEBI Registration No.:** INR000000221	**Neethu Ajay** 5th Floor, Muthoot Towers, M.G. Road, Ernakulam - 682 035, Kerala, India. **Telephone:** +91 48 4427 7580 **Facsimile:** +91 48 4430 0127 **Email:** neethu.ajay@muthootmicrofin.com Investors may contact the Company Secretary and Compliance Officer or the Registrar to the Offer in case of any pre-Offer or post-Offer related grievances including non-receipt of letters of Allotment, non-credit of Allotted Equity Shares in the respective beneficiary account, non-receipt of refund orders or non-receipt of funds by electronic mode, etc. For all Offer related queries and for redressal of complaints, Investors may also write to the BRLMs.

AVAILABILITY OF THE RHP: Investors are advised to refer to the RHP and the section titled *"Risk Factors"* on page 31 of the RHP, before applying in the Offer. A copy of the RHP shall be available on website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in, websites of the Stock Exchanges i.e. BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com, respectively, and the websites of our Company at https://muthootmicrofin.com/offerdocument-related-filings/ and websites of the BRLMs, i.e. ICICI Securities Limited, Axis Capital Limited, JM Financial Limited and SBI Capital Markets Limited at www.icicisecurities.com, www.axiscapital.co.in, www.jmfl.com and www.sbicaps.com respectively.

AVAILABILITY OF BID CUM APPLICATION FORMS: Bid cum Application Forms can be obtained from the Registered Office of **MUTHOOT MICROFIN LIMITED, Tel:** +91 48 4427 7500; **BRLMs : ICICI Securities Limited, Tel:** +91 22 6807 7100; **Axis Capital Limited, Tel:** +91 22 4325 2183; **JM Financial Limited, Tel:** +91 22 6630 3030 and **SBI Capital Markets Limited, Tel:** +91 22 4006 9807; **Syndicate Member: JM Financial Services Limited, Investec Capital Services (India) Private Limited and SBICAP Securities Limited** and at the select locations of the Sub-syndicate Members (as given below), SCSBs, Registered Brokers, RTAs and CDPs participating in the Offer. ASBA Forms will also be available on the websites of BSE and NSE and the Designated Branches of SCSBs, the list of which is available at websites of the Stock Exchanges and SEBI.

Sub-Syndicate Members: Almondz Global Securities Ltd, Anand Rathi Share & Stock Brokers Limited, Anand Share Consultancy, ANS Pvt Limited, Ashwani Dandia & Co, Axis Securities Limited, Bajaj Financial Securities Ltd, Centrum Broking Ltd, Centrum Wealth Management Ltd, Choice Equity Broking Private Limited, DB(International) Stock Brokers Ltd, Eureka Stock & Share Broking Services Ltd, G Raj & Co. (Consultants) Limited, Globe Capital Markets Ltd, HDFC Securities Ltd, IDBI Capital Markets and Securities Ltd, IIFL Securities Ltd, Jhaveri Securities, Jobanputra Fiscal Services Pvt. Ltd, Kalpataru Multiplier Limited, Kantilal Chhaganlal Securities P. Ltd, KJMC Capital Market Services Limited, Kotak Securities Limited, LKP Securities Ltd, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd, Marwadi Shares & Finance, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited, Nuvama Wealth and Investment Limited (Formerly known as Edelweiss Broking Limited), Patel Wealth Advisors Pvt Limited, Prabhudas Lilladher Pvt Limited, Pravin Ratilal Share & Stock Brokers Ltd, Religare Broking Ltd, RR Equity Brokers Pvt Limited, Sharekhan Ltd, SMC Global Securities Limited, Systematix Shares and Stock Brokers Ltd, Trade Bulls Securities (P) Ltd, Way2wealth brokers Pvt Ltd and YES Securities Ltd

Escrow Collection Bank, Refund Bank and Sponsor Bank : ICICI Bank Limited • **Public Offer Account Bank and Sponsor Bank :** Axis Bank Limited

UPI: UPI Bidders can also Bid through UPI Mechanism.

All capitalized terms used herein and not specifically defined shall have the same meaning as ascribed to them in the RHP.

For **MUTHOOT MICROFIN LIMITED**
On behalf of the Board of Directors

Sd/-
Neethu Ajay
Company Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer

Place: Mumbai, Maharashtra
Date: December 16, 2023

MUTHOOT MICROFIN LIMITED is proposing, subject to the receipt of requisite approvals, market conditions and other considerations, to undertake an initial public offering of its Equity Shares and has filed the red herring prospectus dated December 11, 2023 with RoC. The RHP shall be available on the website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in, websites of the Stock Exchanges i.e. BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com, respectively, and is available on the websites of our Company at https://muthootmicrofin.com/offerdocument-related-filings/ and websites of the BRLMs, i.e. ICICI Securities Limited, Axis Capital Limited, JM Financial Limited and SBI Capital Markets Limited at www.icicisecurities.com, www.axiscapital.co.in, www.jmfl.com and www.sbicaps.com respectively. Any potential investors should note that investment in equity shares involves a high degree of risk and for details relating to such risk, please see the section entitled *'Risk Factors'* on page 31 of the RHP. Potential investors should not rely on the DRHP filed with SEBI for making any investment decision, instead investors shall rely on RHP filed with the RoC.

The Equity Shares offered in the Offer have not been, and will not be, registered under the United States Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the **"Securities Act"**) or any state securities laws in the United States, and may not be offered or sold within the United States, except pursuant to an exemption from, or in a transaction not subject to, the registration requirements of the Securities Act, and applicable state securities laws in the United States. Accordingly, the Equity Shares are being offered and sold (i) within the United States solely to persons who are reasonably believed to be "qualified institutional buyers" (as defined in Rule 144A under the Securities Act) under Section 4(a) of the Securities Act, and (ii) outside the United States in "offshore transactions" as defined in and in compliance with Regulation S under the Securities Act and the applicable laws of the jurisdiction where those offers and sales occur. There will be no public offering of Equity Shares in the United States.

A roller-coaster ride for civic infrastructure development

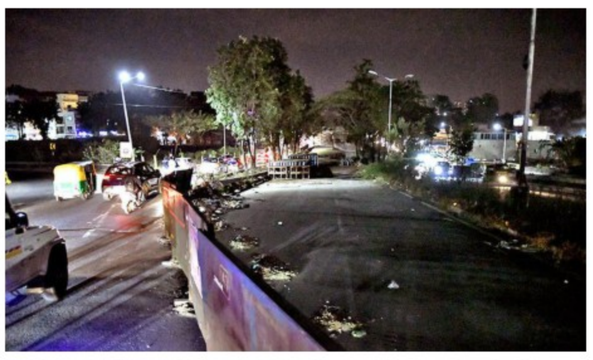
Bengaluru saw unprecedented levels of activity ahead of the Assembly elections in May and later entered an impasse that saw all activities halted for five months, only to be resumed in recent months

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

The year gone by has been a roller-coaster ride for Bengaluru, in terms of its civic infrastructure.

The city saw a burst of unprecedented levels of activity months ahead of the Assembly elections in May, and later entered an impasse that saw all activities coming to a standstill for five months, only to be resumed at a slow pace in the recent months.

Former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai had allocated ₹6,000 crore for the city under the Amruta Nagarothana Scheme, to be taken up over three years starting 2022-23.



Work on the flyover between PES college and Nayandanahalli junction is progressing slowly. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

However, ahead of the elections, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) issued work orders worth the entire ₹6,000 crore in just a few months, drawing the ire of many, including political opposition that cried foul over partisanship and financial indiscipline. It left the entire city dug up.

The BJP relied on this as its poll plank, which seemed to work, as the party improved its tally to 16, from 15, and it gained a 5.4% fillip in its vote share in the Assembly elections.

However, the bubble burst after the Congress came to power.

As Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar took charge as Bengaluru Development Minister, one of his first decisions was to bring all undergoing civic works to a halt.

The Congress has also now reallotted funds to Assembly constituencies, taking away funds from the BJP constituencies and allotting it to those represented by the Congress. The BJP had earlier done the opposite.

REWIND 2023

The Congress government formed four Special Investigation Teams (SITs) to probe the quality of works, and alleged corruption in works taken up in the city during the BJP regime. The H.N. Nagamohan Das Commission is also probing the "40% commission" allegations during the BJP regime.

The government not clearing pending bills that has now ballooned to ₹3,258 crore, led to a face-off with contractors who stopped all emergency works like preparing storm-water drains for monsoons in protest.

Including the two election months, when works came to a standstill, works resumed only by September, and more than five months had passed without any civic works being carried out in the city, a rare occurrence. Even now the government and the BBMP have only cleared a minor part of the pending bills and the contractors are not happy.

City just turned lucky

Due to elections and later this impasse with contractors, the city was not adequately prepared for the monsoon and it was feared that heavy rains may bring the city to its knees like in 2022.

However, the severe drought in the State led to scant rainfall even in the city. "Heavy rains this monsoon would have been disastrous for the city," conceded a senior official.

'Brand Bengaluru'

Mr. Shivakumar initiated the 'Brand Bengaluru' campaign, which garnered a total of over 75,000 suggestions from civic activists, experts and the general public to "fix Bengaluru". The initiative also came under criticism for doing very little on the ground, to which the Minister said this had created a blueprint of the path the city should take ahead.

Mr. Shivakumar hogged headlines by announcing that the government will work to set up a network of tunnel roads in the city. The project has faced stiff opposition from several civic activists and public mobility experts. However, the BBMP has now called for a global tender to conduct a detailed feasibility study of the project.

Mr. Shivakumar also announced a skydeck (watch tower) at the city centre.

Look beyond the binary of public and private spaces to battle discrimination, says CJI Chandrachud

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

"Courts have recognised that a seemingly neutral law might be a tool of oppression to a particular group. To truly achieve substantive equality, the impact of its provisions must be understood in the context of social realities," Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud said here on Sunday.

He was delivering the inaugural Justice E.S. Venkataramiah Centennial Memorial Lecture organised by the National Law School of India University on "Constitutional imperatives of the state navigating discrimination in public and private spaces". He stressed the need for the law to look beyond the binary of public and private spaces to battle discrimination in terms of gender, disability and caste.

"To truly overcome stereotypical roles, the law and policy should transcend the public-private dichotomy and address power imbalances regardless of the locations. This requires a comprehensive approach which considers societal context, historical perspectives and the jurisprudence of discrimination law. The legal landscape must evolve weaving a tapestry that accommodates differences, eradicates biases and ensures substantive equality," he added.

"The Supreme Court's State of the Judiciary report indicated that only 30.4% of district court complexes have washrooms for persons with disabilities and other infrastructural facilities. In preparing for a day at the court, rather than sharpening their arguments and submissions, a lawyer or a litigator is forced to account for parking arrangements and spot washroom facilities inside the court complex," he said. He also lauded the judiciary in Karnataka for having the highest number of employees with disabilities, particularly among their staff.

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, Justice B.V. Nagarathna, and Vice-Chancellor of NLSIU Sudhir Krishnaswamy at the Justice E.S. Venkataramaiah Centennial Memorial Lecture on Sunday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Deve Gowda invited for Ram temple inauguration

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Former Prime Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda has been formally invited for the inauguration of the Ram temple by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22.

Mr. Gowda took to social media on Sunday and said, "I was delighted to receive an invitation for the inauguration of the Lord Ram temple in Ayodhya. The Chairman of the Ram Temple Complex Development Committee Nripendra Misra, Senior RSS leader Ram Lal and Senior VHP leader Alok Kumar met me at my New Delhi residence today."

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated December 18, we have a story on food historian Charmaine O'Brien, who discusses the diversity of India's food culture and the evolving nature of food consumption in the country.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (December 18, Monday), the following articles are available:

- On selecting Election Commissioners **bit.ly/electioncomselect**
- The era of CRISPR therapeutics is here – what can we expect? **bit.ly/crisprtherapeutics**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Vice-principal of pvt. college in the dock for pocketing ₹20 lakh from students' fee

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Vyalikaval police have registered a case of cheating and forgery against the vice-principal of Shri Chaitanya Techno PU College for swindling ₹20 lakh belonging to the students' fee from this March to December.

The accused, identified as G.V. Sambashiva Rao, who was also teaching Mathematics, is absconding since the case came to light. Efforts are on to track him down, a police officer said.

The complainant, Yeluri Phani, manager of the college, in his complaint said that the college admitted around 1,750 students. The accused was given responsibility of collecting the fees and remitting it in the college bank account.

According to the police, the accused instead received the fees in cash and issued fake receipts to students and parents. The incident came to light when the management sent reminders to 23 students for the payments of dues. They appeared before the management with the receipts of payments which after verification turned out to be fake.

Further verification found that the accused had pocketed a total sum of ₹20,06,500, said the police.

Based on the complaint, the police registered a case of cheating and forgery against Sambhashiva Rao.

READER'S MAIL

Chaos outside city railway station

Sir, – The rear side of the city railway station is a mess. With no place for parking, vehicles are parked anywhere and everywhere. There is no prepaid auto counter. The place has been dug up for a couple of years now. There is little a sole policeman can do. The authorities need to restore parking, ensure that vehicles at the entrance do not stop for more than a minute, restore prepaid auto facility, and also make space for app-based cabs and autos.

G. Padmanabhan,
Bengaluru

Playing on roads

Sir, – The recent death of a three-year-old child who was run over by a vehicle is a pointer to the danger children who play on the streets are exposed to. In fact, in many areas we can see children playing on the roads in a raucous and reckless manner. When they play cricket, the ball can hit a passersby and injure them. Shortage of playgrounds can't be an excuse to play on busy streets. Can the police make announcements that streets are not meant for playing? Schools should also alert parents about the danger their children are expose to.

Mohan Das,
Bengaluru

Readers can write to letters.bangalore @thehindu.co.in

Southern Multi State Co-operative Credit & Multi Purpose Society Ltd
Reg. Office: Sreerangam buildings, Iyyattil Junction, Ernakulam

It is proposed to conduct an election general body meeting of the society on 30th December 2023 at 11 AM at Society's Registered office. All members are requested to participate in the election general body meeting.

Ernakulam
13.12.2023

By order
Chairman

Election details

1) No. of vacancies as per bye law of the society	12 total
2) A) General category B) Reserved category 1) Woman 2) SC/ST	10 1 1
3) Date and place for publication of preliminary voters list:	14.12.2023
4) Last date for filing of objections regarding preliminary voters list:	15.12.2023
5) Date of publication of final voters list after hearing objections:	16.12.2023
6) Date of filing of nomination papers (at registered office):	18.12.2023 11 AM to 1 PM
7) Date of scrutiny of nomination papers (at registered office):	19.12.2023 11 AM to 1 PM
8) Last date and time for withdrawal of nomination papers:	20.12.2023 11 AM to 1 PM
9) Publication of final list of contesting candidates :	21.12.2023
10) Date, time and place of polling :	28.12.2023 11 AM to 1 PM At Reg. office
11) After completion of polling counting of votes start and declaration of result.	

V. Radhakrishnan
Rtd Jt. Registrar
Returning Officer

CCB arrests two persons from Kerala trying to sell MDMA

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Anti-Narcotics Wing of the CCB recently arrested two people from Kerala and recovered 20 grams of MDMA and 34 grams of charas worth ₹5 lakh.

The accused, Edwin Joy, 22, and Mishal Mubarak, 21, are natives of Kerala and come to the city for their studies.

However, they dropped out of college, said the police. The accused allegedly sourced the drugs from Nasogi town in Himachal Pradesh. They had smuggled it by train and were trying to sell it to their customers near the railway station when the police arrested them.

The accused had been booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 and had been taken into custody for further investigation.

Meanwhile, the CCB Anti-Narcotics Wing investigation into the ₹16-crore worth MDMA seizure case found that the peddler Leonard had contacts with a few people in the Kannada film industry.

The police are investigating further while stepping up the vigil into cracking drug-related cases ahead of the new year.

BUSINESS CONNECT A Business Initiative

Dindigul Thalappakatti Celebrates Grand Opening of 102nd Store in Hennur, Bengaluru

Dindigul Thalappakatti (DT), legendary Biryani Brand expands its footprint with 18th store in Bengaluru. The world's largest biryani DT brand renowned for its authentic flavors and rich culinary heritage from Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, proudly announces the grand opening of its 102nd store in Hennur, Bengaluru. The new Hennur store stands out as their latest offering in an exciting new premium format. It continues to raise the bar in offering a culinary journey that encapsulates the essence of authentic biryani, captivating taste buds and hearts alike. The grand opening ceremony was a star-studded event, graced by esteemed personalities from both DT's management and distinguished chief guests Mr. Byrati Basavaraj, MLA, KR Puram, Mr. N Santhosh Hedge, Former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, Mr. Shankar Bidari, IPS Officer, Ms. Bharathi BL, International Athlete, Mr. Deepak, CPI, Hennur, Mr. Linagraj, PSI, Hennur and Mr. Mahesh Byakud, PSI, Kothanur. Mr. Satish Nagasamy Dhanabalan, MD of DT had invited food enthusiasts, media, and the local community to join in the celebration and savor the legendary taste of Dindigul biryani. This biryani brand started by Mr. Nagaswamy Naidu, the iconic 'Thalappakatti' himself and is known for its authentic south-indian delicacies, crafted with a perfect blend of spices and tradition. With a legacy spanning decades, the brand has grown to become the world's largest biryani chain, spreading the joy of flavours across India.

iPlanet Announces Grand Launch of India's Largest Apple Premium Partner Store in Indiranagar, Bengaluru

One of the top Apple partners in India, iPlanet is delighted to unveil the grand opening of India's largest Apple Premium Partner Store in Indiranagar, Bengaluru. This momentous occasion reflects iPlanet's commitment to delivering an elevated shopping experience to its valued customers. iPlanet offers a comprehensive Apple experience with its unmatched Apple experts. Customers can explore various Apple products and services, including the latest iPhone, iPad, Mac, Apple Watch, AirPods, HomePod devices, and various accessories. iPlanet hosted an Influencer Workshop that unveiled Apple's creative power. This event provided a deep dive into Apple's creative capabilities, focusing on iPhone, Mac, and Apple Watch. During these sessions, attendees engaged with professionals in photography, videography, and Apple Watch expertise. They also embarked on guided store tours and participated in Q&A sessions. Special offers are available with in-store promotions for 15 days. To mark the launch of the brand-new store, iPlanet is hosting a 3-day carnival featuring a variety of engaging activities such as Apple Product workshops every weekend till 29th Feb 2024, talent showcases, yoga workshops, Apple experience zones, and more. Contests with rewarding prizes and gift vouchers are also part of the festivities. Don't miss out on fantastic offers, and join in celebrating its all-new India s Largest Apple Premium Partner store, dedicated to providing the exceptional customer experience.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I,Binoy Edathadan Gangadharan R/o Villa 116, Peninsula Prakruthi, Ittangur Rd, Sarjapura, B'lore-562125 have changed my minor son's name from Sooryakiran to Sooryakiran Edathadan for all purposes

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, ZAHARA Rizwan Hussain, W/o Ammar Hatim Loliwala, R/at No.8/10, 1st Floor, Hakimi House, Bohra Layout, Gottigere, Bangalore-560083, have changed my name from Zahara Rizwan Hussain to Zahara Ammar Loliwala vide affidavit dated 15-12-2023 before Notary K. V. Mani, Bengaluru.

I, MARYAM Ladsab, W/o Burhanuddin Hatim Loliwala, R/at No.8/10, 1st Floor, Hakimi House, Bohra Layout, Gottigere, Bangalore-560083, have changed my name from Maryam Ladsab to Maryam Burhanuddin Loliwala vide affidavit dated 15-12-2023 before Notary K. V. Mani, Bengaluru.

EDUCATIONAL

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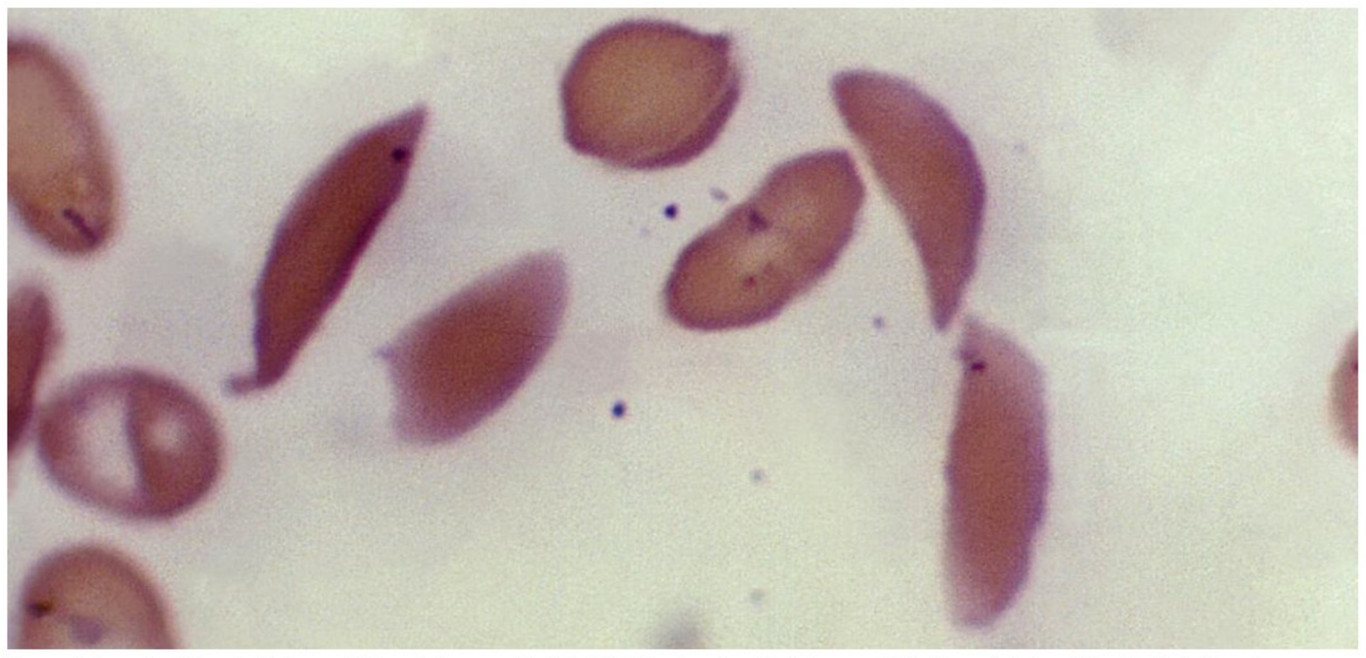
The era of CRISPR therapeutics is here – what can we expect?

In November, the U.K.'s Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency approved exagamglogene autotemcel to treat sickle-cell disease and transfusion-dependent β-thalassemia. The U.S. FDA approved it to treat sickle-cell disease, rendering it one of the first CRISPR-based therapeutics to be approved by two major regulators

Sridhar Sivasubbu
Vinod Scaria

Imagine a future where genetic anomalies can be precisely targeted and corrected using genome editing - a giant leap from our ability to sequence or read human genomes two decades ago. The world of medicine is currently abuzz with news of regulatory agencies' approval for two highly anticipated CRISPR-based therapies for sickle-cell disease and β-thalassaemia in the U.K. and the U.S. The approval is groundbreaking because it signals an era that could transform the lives of millions of patients and families grappling with these inherited blood disorders. To put this in perspective, more than a million people worldwide suffer from thalassemia, of whom 100,000 depend on regular blood transfusions. Another 20 million people around the world are estimated to be suffering from sickle-cell anaemia.



Crescent-shaped red blood cells from a sickle cell disease patient in 1972. The disorder affects haemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen. A genetic mutation causes the cells to become crescent-shaped, which can block blood flow and cause excruciating pain, organ damage, stroke, and other problems. DR. F. GILBERT/CDC VIA AP

Long and short of CRISPR

The discovery of the CRISPR system was the result of almost three decades of pure academic pursuit. Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats (CRISPR) are DNA elements that Spanish researchers discovered in archaea in 1993, and named and described later in a number of bacterial genomes.

These elements contain pieces of genetic material derived from viruses that infect bacteria (for example, bacteriophages) and a set of proteins called Cas, or CRISPR-associated. Researchers tried to explain the elements' effect on antiviral immunity in 2005, but later found that CRISPR + Cas proteins could detect and prevent viral infections. That is, the two formed an antiviral defence system and helped bacteria 'acquire' resistance.

Then, in 2010, scientists demonstrated that CRISPR + specific proteins called Cas9 had the ability to cut double-stranded DNA at specific points. They also found the RNAs molecules that guided the Cas9 proteins to specific positions on a genome. And in 2012, researchers figured out a way to create synthetic RNA that could bind to Cas9 and guide it to a specific point on a DNA, where it could edit the DNA.

This pathbreaking work came from the labs of Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna, and they were awarded the 2020 Nobel Prize in chemistry for it.

Virginijus Siksnys and his colleagues published similar work a few months later (despite having submitted it to the journal much earlier). This study also suggested that Cas9 could be targeted to specific genome locations by crispr RNA (crRNA).

In all, the researchers demonstrated the utility of the CRISPR-Cas9 system as a programmable 'molecular scissor' that could cut in DNA at a chosen spot with unparalleled accuracy. The specific spot could be picked by modifying the crRNA accordingly.The next year, two teams, led by Feng Zhang and George Church, showed that CRISPR-Cas9 could be used to edit the genomes of eukaryotic organisms.

This innovation has since spurred a myriad applications, from targeted genetic therapies to agricultural advancements. The 2020 Nobel Prize not only honoured the researchers: it also symbolised the start of a time in which people couldn't just read human genomes but also edit or modify the genetic code, with potentially long-lasting impacts on the future of medicine and genetic engineering.

CRISPR in medicine

In November this year, the national regulator in the U.K., the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), approved the use of a CRISPR-based method called exagamglogene autotemcel – sold under the brand 'Casgevy' – to treat sickle-cell disease and transfusion-dependent β-thalassemia. The approval came after the MHRA evaluated safety and efficacy data in an ongoing clinical trial in 29 and 42 patients respectively.

In close succession, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration also approved Casgevy to treat sickle-cell disease, rendering it one of the first CRISPR-based therapeutics to be approved by two major drug regulators. In Casgevy, a patient's blood stem cells are extracted, their genes modified to remove the defect that produces the sickling, and regrafted back. These cells then proliferate to produce normal red blood cells. The approvals come full circle 74 years after Linus Carl Pauling described the disease as a molecular disorder. While researchers have developed drugs to treat the symptoms of the disease, Casgevy's approval signals their ability now to fix its molecular basis.

> CRISPR-based therapies could transform the lives of millions of patients and families grappling with inherited blood disorders

This said, while these approvals for CRISPR-based therapeutics are exciting, they are all based on what researchers call first-generation technologies. CRISPR-based clinical technologies have grown to become more efficacious as well as efficient, with a panoply of new applications and specificities.

One fascinating approach is called base-editing, where scientists edit genomes at the resolution of a single nucleotide (DNA is a polymer consisting of multiple nucleotides chained together).

Just a few weeks ago, Verve Therapeutics announced results from an important clinical trial it has been conducting to test a base-editing approach to treat familial hypercholesterolemia, another prevalent and oft-undiagnosed genetic disease.

Yet another emerging technique is prime editing, where researchers use a search-and-replace strategy to directly write or insert specific sequences into an existing genome with high accuracy. A fourth example is of systems that use CRISPR to modify epigenetic effects (effects of a body's environment on its genes) in targeted fashion.

Just the start

None of these technologies are without caveats. Researchers have already reported several safety and accuracy issues. An important one is off-target events: where a CRISPR-Cas9 system becomes inaccurate and edits some other part of the genome, with unintended consequences.So while there is enormous potential for these technologies, the risk needs to be balanced with both short- and long-term benefits. Many of these therapies are also too early in their development cycle. Continued scrutiny and surveillance may yet reveal 'side effects' that we aren't aware of today.

This said, we can still celebrate what Casgevy et al. mean for the millions of people suffering from genetic diseases, including those whose molecular mechanisms remain unknown. The future has arrived, and it looks remarkably promising.

(The authors are senior consultants at the Vishwanath Cancer Care Foundation and adjunct professors at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.)

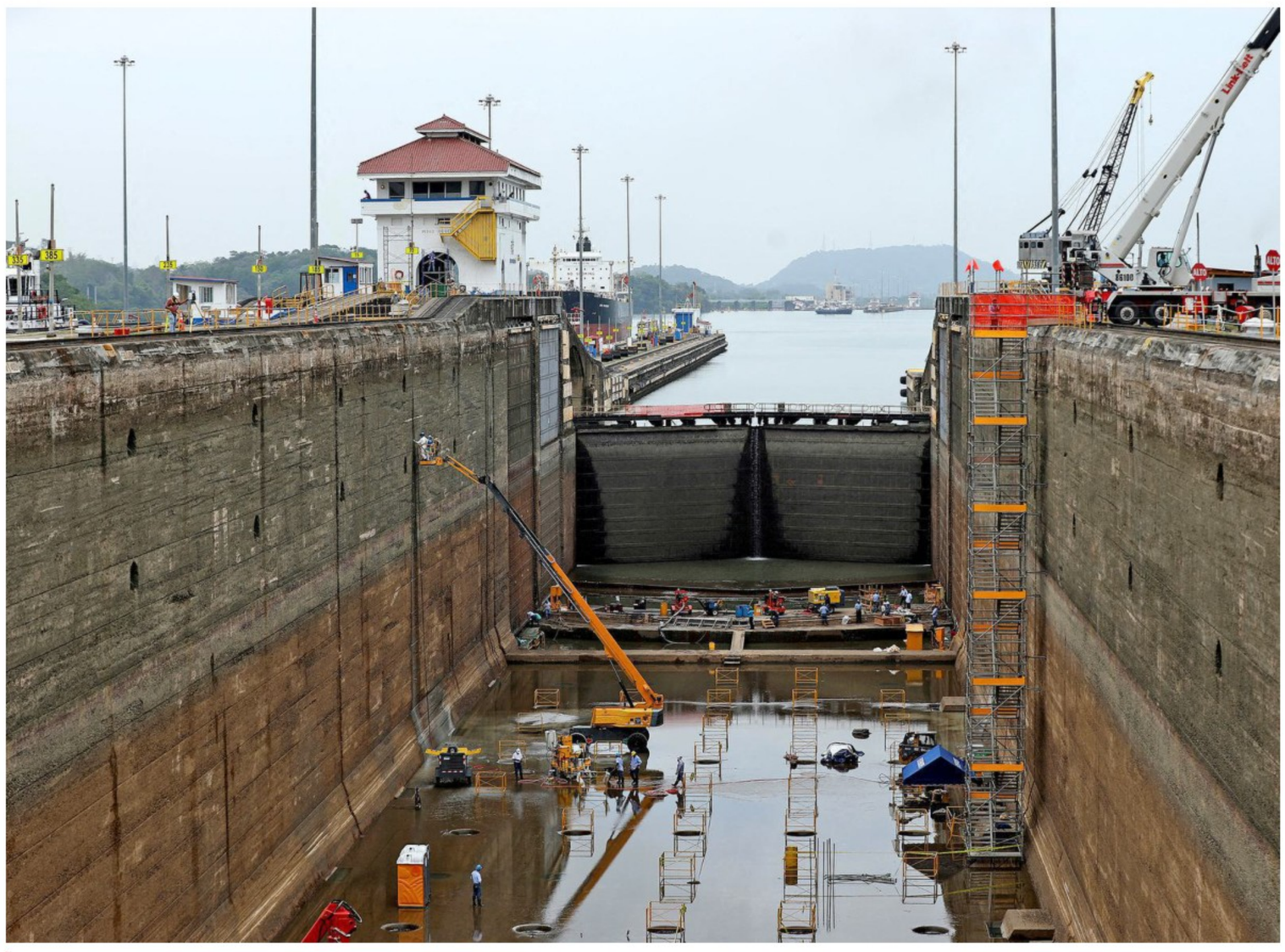
THE GIST

CRISPR was the result of three decades of academic pursuit. CRISPR are DNA elements that Spanish researchers discovered in archaea in 1993, and named and described later in a number of bacterial genomes

Specific proteins called Cas9 have the ability to cut double-stranded DNA at specific points. In 2012, researchers figured out a way to create synthetic RNA that could bind to Cas9 and guide it to a specific point on a DNA, where it could edit the DNA

Researchers have reported safety issues. A CRISPR-Cas9 system could become inaccurate and edit some other part of the genome, with unintended consequences

BIG SHOT



Panama Canal employees work in a dry chamber of the West Lane of Pedro Miguel locks during maintenance, in Panama City in May. The Canal on December 15 said it will increase the number of booking slots after a drought caused the crucial maritime trade route to reduce ship crossings, as well as pushed up fees and traffic. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Kraft process: a paper-maker's craft

Vasudevan Mukunth

The kraft process is a technique that accepts wood chips as input to produce cellulose fibres, which are then used to make paper and other materials used in everyday objects. Paper is most commonly produced by the kraft process today.

The process is chemical in nature. The chips are treated with water, sodium hydroxide, and sodium sulphide – the last two forming a highly alkaline mixture called white liquor – at a relatively high temperature. This breaks the bonds between lignin (an organic polymer and important constituent of cell walls), hemicellulose (cellulose-like fibres that are shorter), and cellulose. The step is followed by those to obtain the wood pulp, wash off and recover the reaction chemicals, bleaching, and processing.

The strength of the paper produced by a chemical process like this is determined by its sulphidity, i.e. the relative amount of sulphur it contains, and kraft-process paper has higher sulphidity than that produced by other processes.

The kraft process has replaced more toxic methods but does need a large volume of water. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

While the kraft process is ubiquitous today and replaced more toxic and resource-intensive methods to produce paper, it requires a large volume of water; the process to remove lignin from the wood chips also discharges the lignin through water along with dissolved carbon, alcohol ions, and heavy metals. While these substances can be removed from the effluent before it dissolves in a water body, the fact that they're produced at all makes the kraft process – and the human demand for paper – environmentally unfriendly.

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to
science@thehindu.co.in
with the subject 'Daily page'

From Page One

School staff arrested for making students clean manholes in Malur

Following the incident, the KREIS, under which Morarji Desai schools operate, conducted a preliminary inquiry when several other allegations of ill-treatment of students at the particular school have emerged.

Private video taken
On Sunday, it also came to light that a private video of a girl child was also taken by one of the staff members. Mr. Raju, who visited the school, said that he had seen the video in question and that a complaint will be lodged. "We need to probe who took that video; are there any other instances of such videos being taken; and whether it is part of a larger racket. This will be part of the probe," he said.

Bad food provided
Several parents and students at the school have also alleged that bad quality food was provided to the students. Speaking to the media, a girl student said that when they developed stomach ache after eating rotten eggs, the staff refused to get them medical aid, alleging the students were "acting".

School demanding money
A few parents also alleged that the staff members of the school were demanding money from parents for the construction of a temple.

CID to probe Belagavi stripping and assault case

The incident occurred at Vantamuri village on December 11, when the State legislature was in session in Belagavi. The jurisdictional Kakati police rushed to the village, rescued her, took her to a hospital for treatment. The Belagavi police have so far arrested 13 people in connection with the case and have suspended a police inspector of Kakati station for alleged dereliction of duty.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has also sent a fact-finding commission and attacked the Congress government for alleged "breakdown of law and order". The case also led to much consternation in the recently concluded legislature session.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah responding to a question on the case on Sunday, said that the government had full confidence in the capabilities of the Karnataka police in investigating the matter. "However, if need be, we are ready to hand over the case to any investigating agency," he said.

Helper electrocuted while clearing debris

People at the site of the tower collapse on Sunday.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 20-year-old labourer died of electrocution, while clearing the debris of a mobile tower that collapsed a few days ago, on Laggere Main Road in Nandini Layout on Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Jatin Kumar. He was part of a crane operator team to help remove the debris.

The crane came in contact with a live electricity wire and Jatin collapsed on the ground, while others suffered a jolt and were thrown away from the crane. They escaped with minor injuries.

The severely injured Jatin was rushed to a hospital where he was declared dead.

The Nandini Layout police have registered a case of causing death due to negligence against the telecom company and crane operators for further investigation.

The mobile tower collapsed owing to construction activities on the adjacent plot on Friday in Parvathi Nagar, Laggere. Eleven people living in the adjacent building narrowly escaped and were evacuated after the incident.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, DEC. 18	
RISE 06:35	SET 17:57
RISE 11:22	SET 23:24
TUESDAY, DEC. 19	
RISE 06:35	SET 17:58
RISE 12:05	SET 00:00
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 20	
RISE 06:36	SET 17:58
RISE 12:46	SET 00:19

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	28	23
Mysuru	30	22
Bengaluru	27	19

Bengaluru Today
28°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be slight cool. Day will be comfortable. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
29°C A mostly dry weather to prevail. Day will be slight warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant.

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'Sriki was forced to transfer 150 to 170 stolen bitcoins while in custody'

He reportedly made the same allegation to the Special Investigation Team probing the scam, following which the team is now looking into the movement of 150 to 170 bitcoins when he was in police and judicial custody, sources say

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

Sources close to hacker Srikrishna Ramesh aka Sriki, whom *The Hindu* spoke to, claimed the hacker was "forced" to transfer bitcoins that he had allegedly stolen from Bitfinex, while in custody in 2020 and 2021.

Sriki reportedly made the same allegations to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the bitcoin scam, following which the team is now investigating the movement of 150 to 170 bitcoins when the hacker was in police and judicial custody, sources in the SIT said.

The SIT also has some leads on a few beneficiaries of the scam.
GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

During the time of the movement of these bitcoins there was a big rally in the price of bitcoins, and the worth of the bitcoins that Sriki was allegedly forced to move to benami wallets amounted to around ₹600 crore.

"At this point we have a lot of information and claims. We are trying to corroborate them in such a way that we will be able to prove them in court," a senior official said.

The SIT also has some leads on some of the beneficiaries of the scam encashing the proceeds of the swindled bitcoins in local Indian banks.

This is expected to help the police track the money trail from the bitcoins to the banks.

In his voluntary statement, Sriki himself admitted to hacking Bitfinex, a cryptocurrency exchange operated by iFinex Inc and registered in the British Virgin Islands.

Bitfinex was founded in 2012. It was originally a peer-to-peer Bitcoin exchange, and later added support for other cryptocurrencies. In 2016, Bitfinex reported that hackers stole 1,19,000 coins, then worth $70 million.

The Department of Justice in the United States of America recovered 94,000 coins and arrested a couple identified as Heather Morgan and Ilya Lichtenstein.

In Israel, two men were arrested. Sriki has claimed to have been part of the large cyber heist and claimed to have stolen 400 bitcoins.

It is alleged that sleuths from Central Crime Branch (CCB), Bengaluru City police, who arrested Sriki in a darknet drugs case, learnt of the stolen bitcoins and allegedly forced him to transfer some of these bitcoins to various wallets.

It is alleged that the coins were moved while he was in judicial custody in Parappana Agrahara Central Prison between December 1, 2020, and 17 April, 2021, and between 7 November, 2021, and 10 November, 2021.

The SIT has already questioned several officials posted with the CCB and Parappana Agrahara Prison during these periods.

BDA

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Date of Commencement of e-Auction on : 19.12.2023

Minimum raise of Bid Price in multiples of Rs. 500 per sq. mtr.

The Bangalore Development Authority, Bengaluru, announces the e-Auction of Residential Corner / Intermediate Sites. The auction / sale of these sites is conducted in accordance with the Bangalore Development Authority's Disposal of Corner Sites, Intermediate Sites and other Auctionable Sites Rules, 1984. The sites are auctioned on **"AS IS WHERE IS"** BASIS.

Sl.No. 01 to 66 Last date & time to express interest of participation e-Auction: 01.01.2024; 05.00 pm IST

Date Commencement of live bidding on: 02.01.2024; 11.00 a.m. IST
Last date for bid closing on: 03.01.2024 up to 5.00 p.m. (Delta time 5.00 minutes)

Sl. No.	Site No.	Dimensions in Metres: East to West	Dimensions in Metres: North to South	Area in Sq. Mtr.
RMV 2nd Stage, Bhoopasandra Village				
1	7	29.40	(17.60+19.60)/2	546.84
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 1,51,200/- Contact : 9448739250				
Chandra Layout				
2	97	16.15	14.02	226.42
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 1,35,000/- Contact : 9535575790				
Anjanapura Township 5th Block				
3	175	9	(4.00+4.80)/2	39.6
4	400/A	12.00	(17.20+13.10)/2	181.80
5	381/A	12.00	(9.00+13.10)/2	132.60
6	365	12.00	(13.00+17.70)/2	184.20
7	332	(14.50+10.20)/2	12.00	148.20
8	6	(12.30+13.70)/2	23.50	305.50
9	85	(13.00+4.80)/2	11.45	101.90
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 58,350/- Contact : 9945208154/8884747093				
BTM-II Stage, Bilekanahally Village				
10	132	(15.25+14.50)/2	27.20	404.60
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 1,50,500/- Contact : 9945208154/8884747093				
Anjanapura Township 1st Block				
11	593	(9.00+3.70)/2	12.00	76.20
12	647	(8.80+9.20)/2	12.70	114.30
13	684	(8.00+2.50)/2	12.00	63.00
14	711	(7.50+3.10)/2	12.00	63.50
15	740	(8.40+5.00)/2	12.00	80.40
16	620	(12.50+6.50)/2	12.00	114.00
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 55,500/- Contact : 9945208154/8884747093				

Sl. No.	Site No.	Dimensions in Metres: East to West	Dimensions in Metres: North to South	Area in Sq. Mtr.
Further Extension of Banashankari 6th Stage, 4th 'T' Block				
17	1111	(6.00+5.50)/2	9.00	51.75
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 60,000/- Contact : 9945208154/8884747093				
Banashankari 6th Stage, 10th Block				
18	295	5.90	9.00	53.10
19	296	6.00	9.00	54.00
20	255	6.00	9.00	54.00
21	256	6.00	9.00	54.00
22	218	6.00	9.00	54.00
23	236	5.40	9.00	48.60
24	507	9.00	12.00	108.00
25	275	5.80	9.00	52.20
26	276	5.80	9.00	52.20
27	353	5.70	9.00	51.30
28	354	6.00	9.00	54.00
29	431	5.10	9.00	45.90
30	1211	(6.0+7.0)/2	9.00	58.50
31	705	9.00	(9.5+8.5)/2	81.00
32	724	9.00	(5.0+5.2)/2	45.90
33	412	6.70	9.00	60.30
34	411	6.00	9.00	54.00
35	373	5.60	9.00	50.40
36	374	6.80	9.00	61.20
37	334	6.00	9.00	54.00
38	14	(13.40+12.30)/2	24.00	308.48
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 54,000/- Contact : 9945208154/8884747093				

Sl. No.	Site No.	Dimensions in Metres: East to West	Dimensions in Metres: North to South	Area in Sq. Mtr.
Further Extn. of Anjanapura 10th Block				
39	437	12.00	(10.90+9.30)/2	121.20
40	463	12.00	(10.60+9.50)/2	120.60
41	438	12.00	(9.50+8.00)/2	105.00
42	464	12.00	(10.80+11.90)/2	136.20
43	528	12.00	(10.80+12.00)/2	136.80
44	553	12.00	(13.10+12.00)/2	150.60
45	579	(12.10+12.50)/2	24.00	295.20
46	580	24.00	(15.30+13.40)/2	344.40
47	595	24.00	(11.30+13.40)/2	296.40
48	572	(15.70+15.00)/2	24.00	368.40
49	587	(13.40+17.00)/2	24.30	369.36
50	588	(17.00-17.30)/2	24.30	416.74
51	450	12.00	(11.60+10.70)/2	133.80
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 63,400/- Contact : 9945208154/8884747093				
Further Extn. of Anjanapura 11th Block				
52	1271	(6.80+5.80)/2	9.00	56.70
53	1272	(4.30+5.80)/2	9.00	45.45
54	1302	(9.20+7.00)2	9.00	72.90
55	1303	(6.20+7.00)/2	9.00	59.40
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 72,350/- Contact : 9945208154/8884747093				

Sl. No.	Site No.	Dimensions in Metres: East to West	Dimensions in Metres: North to South	Area in Sq. Mtr.
Banashankari 6th Stage, 9th Block				
56	1206	12.00	8.00	96.00
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 52,000/- Contact : 9945208154/8884747093				
J.P. Nagar 8th Phase, 2nd Block				
57	321	(7.60+6.40)/2	19.00	133.00
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 65,000/- Contact : 9945208154/8884747093				
Nagarabhavi 1st Phase				
58	197	(12.20+13.90)/2	(10.40+5,90)/2	106.35
59	194	(15.30+16.60)/2	(11.85+5.30)/2	136.77
60	168	(18.30+19.0)/2	(19.0+15.0)/2	317.05
61	193	(12.20+13.50)/2	(15.05+10.0)/2	160.88
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 1,12,500/- Contact : 9535575790				
Further Extention of Sir. M. Vishweshwaraiah Layout 8th Block				
62	541	18.00	(7.10+9.14)/2	146.16
63	1007	(12.00+18.80)/2	18.00	277.20
64	844	12.00	(10.10+8.90)/2	114.00
65	975	(8.60+9.00)/2	12.00	105.60
66	1177	(7.40+7.60)/2	12.00	90.00
Initial bid price per Sq.Mtr. is Rs. 64,000/- Contact : 9880973636				

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR e-AUCTION

1. The auction purchaser should be a Citizen of India.
2. EMD amount is fixed at **Rs. 4.00 lakh** (Rupees Four Lakh only) per site and this amount along with the e-Auction fee should be remitted as mentioned on the e-Procurement portal. 5% Service charge on EMD shall be deducted during refund if remitted to BDA's account instead of E-Auction portal.
3. Advice letters will be sent by e-Mail to successful bidders (highest bidders) to remit 25% of the total cost after deducting EMD amount of **Rs.4.00 lakh** within 72 hours (excluding bank holidays if any) from the closing time of e-Auction to the below-mentioned BDA's Bank Account; and the challan for remittance should be submitted to the Accounts Officer, Finance Department ('D' Block, 2nd Floor, Room No.308). In case of failure to remit 25% within stipulated time, EMD shall be forfeited.

   If the advice letter has not been received, the auction purchaser has to calculate 25% value and remit it as per the fixed time or receive the advice letter by visiting the head office of BDA and remit it as per the fixed time.

   Bank Name:- Canara Bank, BDA Complex Branch, Kumara Krupa West, Bengaluru-560020.

   Savings Account Name:- Bangalore Development Authority, Bengaluru.

   Savings Account Number:- 2828101053014 IFSC Code No.:- CNRB0002828

   Mode of Payment:- RTGS / NEFT

   Bidders shall pay EMD / 25% from their own bank account only.
4. Uploading of PAN Card in e-auction portal is compulsory (Should be attested by Gazetted Officer/Notary/Attested by Embassy Office in case of N.R.I.). NRI's interested in participating in the e-auction may do so by uploading self attested certificates. Successful bidders can submit certification issued by Indian Embassy later.
5. Successful bidders after remitting 25% of the final bid amount should pay the balance 75% amount within 45 days of receiving the allotment letter from BDA.
6. EMD amount of Rs. 4. Lakhs of unsuccessful bidders will be credited to their Account within one month
7. **For more general terms and conditions visit our website: www.bdabangalore.org**
8. **There should be minimum of 2 bidders for the e-auction sites. Single Bidder will be rejected.**
9. During bidding, if there is any duplication of Nick names for the same site, such bid will be rejected without assigning any reasons.
10. E-auction bidders can download the New e-Auction bidding user manual by logging on to the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.** For more information contact Karnataka Public Procurement Portal : 080-46010000 & 080-68948777.
11. Bidders are required to download the prescribed model signature format (in which applicant's name and father's name in Kannada & English Language) and Contact Information format from the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in,** fill in the details and upload it on the website.
12. Joint Purchasers of the Site shall specify joint name in the Format provided and jointly upload their Aadhar card, PAN card, Marriage Certificate, Passport or any other Government issued documents in the e-Auction portal. Later requests for Joint registration will be rejected.
13. The auctioned Sites will be allotted to the successful bidders in the same condition as they are. Bidders participating in the e-auction must physically check the location of the site, Road width etc., before bidding. Sites allotted in the e-auction will not be cancelled / substituted.
14. Bidders participating in E-Auction are meant to adhere to all the terms and conditions specified above.

Bidders have to read all the Terms and Conditions before bidding and shall participate accordingly.

For location of sites and other details, log on to https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

BDA site related Queries 080-23368435 / 23368036 and KPPP technical issues contact 080-46010000 / 68948777

BANGALORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru - 560 020.

No. BDA/EM/e-Auction/T-03/2023-24 Date: 16.12.2023

Sd/- Engineer Member

THE HINDU
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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The increase in the number of GST return filers

65 In percentage. The number of GST return filers rose to 1.13 crore in five years till April 2023. As per data, 90% of eligible taxpayers are filing returns by the end of the filing month in the current fiscal year. PTI

The amount FPIs invested in Indian equity markets

1.5 in ₹ lakh crore. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have made a net investment of around ₹60,000 crore in the debt market in 2023. This follows the worst-ever net outflow of ₹1.21 lakh crore by FPIs in 2022. PTI

Migrants who drowned as a vessel capsized off Libya

60 A boat carrying dozens of Europe-bound migrants capsized off the coast of Libya, leaving more than 60 people dead. The shipwreck was the latest tragedy in this part of the Mediterranean Sea. AP

Test wickets taken by Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon

500 Nathan Lyon claimed his 500th Test wicket on Sunday to join an exclusive club of just seven others to achieve the feat. Others in the club include Muralitharan (800) and Warne (708). AFP

The Mcap of nine of the top-10 most valued firms

2.26 in ₹ lakh crore. The combined market valuation (Mcap) increased with Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys emerging as the biggest gainers. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On selecting Election Commissioners

What does The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Office and Terms of Office) Bill, 2023 passed by the Rajya Sabha say? How is the new mechanism different from the one spelled out by the Supreme Court?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan. R

The story so far:
On December 12, the Rajya Sabha passed The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Office and Terms of Office) Bill, 2023. It is likely to be enacted into a law after being passed by the Lok Sabha in the current winter session. It provides for the procedure for appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the other two Election Commissioners (ECs).

What does the Constitution say?
Article 324 provides for the composition of the Election Commission of India (ECI). It consists of the CEC and two other ECs. The Constitution provides that the appointment of the CEC and EC shall, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, be made by the President. While the existing parliamentary law provides for their conditions of service, it is silent with respect to appointments. The appointments till date are made by the President, that is the Central Government and there is no mechanism for ensuring independence during the appointment process.

What did the Supreme Court rule?
A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Anoop Baranwal in 2015 pleaded for the Supreme Court to issue directions to set up an independent, collegium-like system for the appointment of the CEC and ECs. The Supreme Court in this case, in March 2023, held that there has been a legislative vacuum due to the absence of any law by Parliament in the last 73 years (since the adoption of the Constitution) with respect to the appointment of the CEC and EC. The independence of the ECI is essential for ensuring free and fair elections that is paramount for a vibrant democracy. The Supreme Court drew

GETTY IMAGES

reference to various other institutions supporting constitutional democracy that have independent mechanisms for the appointment of its head/members like the National and State Human Rights Commission, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Information Commission, Lokpal etc.

In the past, the Dinesh Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms (1990) and the Law Commission in its 255th report on Electoral Reforms (2015), had suggested that the CEC and ECs should be appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Leader of the Opposition or the largest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha. Considering these recommendations, the Supreme Court, exercising its powers under Article 142 (to issue directions for doing 'complete justice' in any matter), laid down that the CEC and ECs shall be appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the CJI and the Leader of the Opposition or the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha. It said that this mechanism shall be in place till Parliament enacts a law on this matter.

What does the proposed law provide?
The CEC and other ECs shall be appointed from persons who are holding or have held a post equivalent to the rank of Secretary to the Government of India. There shall be a search committee headed by the Minister of Law and Justice, who shall prepare a panel of five persons for consideration to the selection committee. The CEC and EC shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation of this selection committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister. It is for the first time that the Parliament is proposing a structured mechanism for identification of suitable persons for the post of CEC and EC. However, this bill removes the CJI from the selection process that was laid down in the *Anoop Baranwal* case.

What are the best practices globally?
The international practices for selection and appointment of members to the electoral body varies between different democracies. In South Africa, the President of the Constitutional Court, representatives of the Human rights Court and gender equality are involved. In the U.K., the House of Commons approves the candidates, whereas in the U.S., the appointment is by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

While the proposed Bill moves the appointment process from just an executive decision to a committee-based selection, it is still tilted in favour of an incumbent government. The Supreme Court had considered the recommendations of various committees and also the mechanism for appointment to certain independent bodies like the CBI (where the CJI is involved) before laying down its selection procedure. While it is the prerogative of Parliament to legislate on this subject, it may have been appropriate to retain the CJI in the selection committee to ensure utmost independence. However, in all likelihood the Bill is likely to be enacted into a law in its present form. It would be laudable and instil a great deal of confidence in the public about the functioning of the ECI, if at least the selections under the new law are made by unanimous decisions by the proposed selection committee.

Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. He currently trains civil-service aspirants at 'Officers IAS Academy'. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

- On December 12, the Rajya Sabha passed The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Office and Terms of Office) Bill, 2023.
- The Constitution provides that the appointment of the CEC and EC shall, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, be made by the President.
- The proposed law suggests that the CEC and EC shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation of a selection committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister.

What led to the coup attempt in Sierra Leone?

What are the factors which led to political instability in one of the poorest West African countries?

Jerry Franklin. A
Nithyashree R.B.

The story so far:
On November 26, unidentified gunmen targeted the Wilberforce military barracks and several police stations and correctional centres in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The Minister of Information and Civic Education declared the attacks in the capital as an unsuccessful coup attempt to overthrow the government. In August 2023, the Sierra Leone police had arrested several people, including senior military officers who were accused of planning violent attacks on government institutions. The recent attacks were an attempt to free the military officers.

What is happening in Sierra Leone?
Three specific factors play a role in the recent events in Sierra Leone.

First, is the political instability. The political climate in Sierra Leone has been unstable since President Julius Maada Wonie Bio's narrow re-election in June, which was achieved without the need for a run-off election. The outcome was contested by the opposing All People's Congress party, who alleged that the election was manipulated. The opposition boycotted the parliament declaring a policy of non-engagement with the government, with elected members not taking up office at any level of the government until October.

Second comes the economic instability. The country is experiencing a high cost of living crisis and severe poverty. The inflation rate in Sierra Leone went up by 50.94% in August. According to the UN, 59.2% of the population lives in poverty. The youth unemployment rate was 4.15% in 2022. The economic policies of President Bio, worsened the economic crisis, causing the cost of living to escalate. It resulted in violent protests in July and August 2022 demanding the resignation of President Bio. Since his electoral victory five months ago, Mr. Bio has been under scrutiny due to the challenging economic state of the country. Third is the aggression of the police. The prison riot of 2020 in the overcrowded Pademba prison was quelled by using live ammunition. Similarly, the protests of August 2022 left six police officers and 27 protesters dead. Resentment towards the government persists due to the lack of accountability towards protest casualties, as police aggression continues.

What has been the state response?
An indefinite curfew was immediately levied following the attack and was lifted on November 27, only for new curfews to be imposed. The Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority (SLCAA) informed airlines to reschedule flights according to the new nationwide curfew. A cash reward has been declared to anyone who could provide details about the coup leaders. President Bio declared that calm had been restored, but shots were fired in Murray town on November 26, amid security operations to capture the leaders of the attack.

Will the ECOWAS intervene?
Since 2020, six African countries have undergone nine coups and coup attempts. Countries including Niger, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Gabon and Sudan are under military rule. The growing antagonism of people towards democratically elected governments paved the way for the junta to legitimise their takeovers. The Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) intolerance towards unconstitutional takeovers was emphasised when the organisation threatened Niger with military intervention and levied economic sanctions. Sierra Leone is a member country of ECOWAS and hence if any security concern arises in the future, ECOWAS and the member countries will step in to maintain constitutional order. The visit from the ECOWAS' delegates to the country highlights its commitment towards democracy. Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world and if a coup attempt is successful, the consequent ECOWAS intervention and sanction will be detrimental.

Jerry Franklin is a post-graduate scholar at Madras Christian College. Nithyashree RB is a post-graduate scholar at Stella Maris College.

THE GIST

- On November 26, unidentified gunmen targeted the Wilberforce military barracks and several police stations and correctional centres in Freetown, Sierra Leone.
- The country is experiencing a high cost of living crisis and severe poverty. The inflation rate in Sierra Leone went up by 50.94% in August.
- The Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) intolerance towards unconstitutional takeovers was emphasised when the organisation threatened Niger with military intervention and levied economic sanctions.

With wages pending and no work, MGNREGA workers migrate in big numbers

Kumar Buradikatti
KALABURAGI

Campaign: MGNREGA workers posting letters to the Prime Minister at a post office in Kalaburagi on Friday, demanding that the latter pay the pending wages and increase the guaranteed wage employment from 100 days to 150. ARUN KULKARNI

Amid heated arguments between the Union and State governments over dues payable to the latter under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Karnataka's demand for increasing man-days from 100 to 150 because of prevailing drought, rural labourers have launched a letter campaign, addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, demanding payment of pending wages and increase in the man-days.

Under the aegis of the Grameena Koolikaarmikara Sanghatane (GRAKOOS), which works with rural labourers at the grassroots level, MGNREGA labourers in 16 districts *en masse* wrote letters and dropped them in post boxes on Friday. "The rural labourers are heavily dependent on the MGNREGA as there is little agricultural activity due to drought. The government is neither paying them for the work they have completed nor giving fresh work on demand. Since our repeated requests on both counts went in vain, we have launched the campaign. Labourers have posted letters in the headquarters of 16 districts now. The remaining would continue to post letters in their respective gram panchayats for the next few days," Sharanagouda, a local leader of GRAKOOS, told *The Hindu*.

Extent of dues

The Union government said there are no MGNREGA dues payable to Karnataka in the current financial year. However, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge has made it clear that the Union government is yet to pay ₹468 crore as on December 11, 2023.

The Union government, in response to Lok Sabha member Sumalatha, also claimed that it had not received any request from Karnataka to increase the man-days. Countering this, Mr. Kharge said in the winter session of the State legislature recently that the State wrote to the Centre on September 14 and 16. He said he wrote personally to Union Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh on September 20 and sent a reminder on October 18, which was, Mr. Kharge claimed, acknowledged by Mr. Singh on October 31.

Meanwhile, MGNREGA labourers in Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, and Ballari districts, contacted by *The Hindu*, were unanimous on two issues – they said they had not received wages for the work they had completed nor had they been provided with work on demand even for 100 days a year as guaranteed by the Act.

Burdened by loans

"My husband and I have only one acre of land where we normally cultivate red gram. It is not enough for us to sustain. With drought this year, the crop is destroyed. The loans we borrowed for the cultivation are on our shoulders. Since we were not paid for the work we did under the job scheme for the last six months, we had to borrow additional loans from the local lenders on inflated interest to survive. The interest is growing and the government is not paying our wages," Neelamma, a labourer from Mahagaon village in Kamalapur taluk of Kalaburagi district, told *The Hindu*. She was among around 30 MGNREGA labourers who posted letters to the Prime Minister from Kalaburagi post office on Friday.

Abhay Kumar, the founder of GRAKOOS, attributes the widespread migration from rural areas in Kalyana Karnataka region to the denial of work and delayed payment of wages under the MGNREGA.

"Drought has left fewer livelihood options in the rural areas of arid Kalyana Karnataka. The job guarantee scheme, if implemented properly, could be a saviour. Unfortunately, the government is showing the least interest in it. As per the MGNREG Act, the government should give jobs to labourers within 15 days of receiving applications. But it is not giving jobs even after six months. Inordinate delay in wage payment is another big issue. So people are now migrating to cities such as Bengaluru in search of work," Mr. Kumar said.

Headed to Bengaluru

Shekhar, an MGNREGA labourer from Wadnalli in Yadgir district, said that 25% of the population in most of the villages have already migrated.

"My father, my mother, and I have been waiting for the payment of back wages for the last two months. Now, we are planning to go to Bengaluru to work as construction labourers. Around 50 families from my village have already left for Bengaluru," Mr. Shekhar said.

Not proper to criticise caste census even before report is public: CM

The question of discussing its contents or merits will arise only after the report is before the government, he says

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with children at the inauguration of the Balamandira Girls Home in Gadag on Sunday. Law Minister H.K. Patil is seen. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

It is not proper to oppose or criticise the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey (popularly called caste census) even before the report is public, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said in Gadag on Sunday.

"The Justice H. Kantharaju report on the socio-economic condition of various communities and classes in the State is being opposed by some political and religious leaders who are claiming it is unscientific. It is not proper to oppose it before knowing its contents. The Karnataka Permanent Backward Classes Commission of the State is yet to submit the report to the government. It is yet to be received or accepted. The question of discussing its contents or merits will arise only after the report is before the government," he told journalists.

Comment that it is not scientific is based on speculation, without knowing the contents of the report, he said. "Let the report be submitted and then we can discuss about it," he said.

Two powerful caste blocs of Karnataka -- separately under the banner of the All-India Veerashaiva Mahasabha (AIVM) and Vokkaliga Sangha -- have opposed the caste census report calling it "unscientific" and demanded fresh census.

During the course of the session last week, Mahasabha had submitted a petition -- signed by Ministers M.B. Patil, Eshwar Khandre, and Shivanand Patil - urging Mr. Siddaramaiah to discard the caste census conducted in 2016. Sangha's petition earlier had been signed by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and JD(S) president and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy with a similar demand.

Interestingly, AICC chief had publicly criticised Mr. Shivakumar's stand in Rajya Sabha. "All upper caste people are united on this," Mr. Kharge had said, when the BJP members sought his opinion on the differences within the State government on the caste census issue.

On corruption

At Gadag, to a query on charges of corruption, Mr. Siddaramaiah said, "We will not tolerate any case of corruption. The government will take strict action." "If we come to know of any complaints or credible allegations of corruption anywhere in the State, we will not keep quiet. We will order a detailed investigation into the allegations and action will follow," he said. He was reacting to a question on allegations of some KSRTC officers accepting bribe to depute drivers and conductors on various routes.

Mr. Siddaramaiah was in Gadag to inaugurate the Balamandira Girls Home. Law Minister H.K. Patil was also present.

'BJP is circulating edited video on poll promises'

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday denied allegation by some BJP leaders that he had made a statement in the winter session of the legislature expressing his inability to fulfil poll-time promises.

"Some BJP leaders like C.N. Ashwath Narayan, C.T. Ravi and others are sharing a fudged video that implies that the Congress government is unable to fulfil its poll promises and that the promises were made only for political gains. This is false and misleading. It is nothing but a deliberate attempt to spread misinformation. This is a deceptive tactic involving circulating a conveniently edited video that distorts my statements. It creates a false impression," he said in Gadag on Sunday.

> Such attempts to manipulate narratives by presenting distorted videos are attempts at creating misinformation that undermines the public's right to accurate information.
>
> **SIDDARAMAIAH**
> Chief Minister

He further said that if the people watch the original, unaltered video, they will understand the true meaning of his remarks. "I appeal to the people not to believe the manipulated narrative," he said.

"Such attempts to manipulate narratives by presenting distorted videos are attempts at creating misinformation that undermines the public's right to accurate information. We urge the public to critically examine the authenticity of information that they are exposed to by such sources and reject attempts to mislead them through edited content. The focus should remain on holding political parties accountable for their actions and commitments, rather than resorting to deceptive tactics," he said.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Field day for journalists

Journalists in Mysuru had a field day after television channels began flashing the involvement of

Manoranjan, a 34-year-old engineering graduate and a resident of the city, in the security breach in Parliament last Wednesday.

When they made a beeline to his residence in the city, Manoranjan's father, Devaraja Gowda (*in picture*), gave no-holds-barred interviews to media personnel, freely answering most of their queries about his son. But, a day later, he had clammed up. He sought excuse from the media personnel turning up outside his house with folded hands. However, reports on Manoranjan continued to appear in various news outlets. Only, it was attributed to unnamed sources. They ranged from locking up of Manoranjan's room to seizing the collection of his books and blocking his bank account, besides co-accused Sagar Sharma's visit to Manoranjan's house a couple of months ago. There was also speculation of Manoranjan's visit to Cambodia to work as a volunteer and his exercise of the option of NOTA in the last polls. All of it was circulated on WhatsApp and attributed to unnamed "sources" in the police and Intelligence.

Preaching and practising

After the security breach in Parliament, former Minister and BJP leader K.S. Eshwarappa, in a press conference in Shivamogga, argued that the incident should not be politicised. Terming it shocking, he stressed the need for serious measures to avoid such incidents. He also criticised the Congress leaders for their comments on Mysuru MP Pratap Simha, whose office issued passes to the intruders.

Interestingly, the former Minister, two days later, was doing the exact opposite of what he preached. Reacting to the bomb threat call to Raj Bhavan, Mr. Eshwarappa suspected the role of goondas of a particular community in the incident. Even before the police investigated the case and arrested the accused, the senior BJP leader had arrived at a conclusion. However, it turned out that the bomb threat to Raj Bhavan was a hoax.

Competitive victimhood

When senior Congress legislator B.R. Patil was speaking on issues related to North Karnataka in the recently concluded session at Belagavi, the ruling and Opposition members argued on who among them was a bigger victim. Mr. Patil, who was speaking on national highways, appreciated Union Minister Nitin Gadkari for his contribution in developing national highways, but said that he has not been recognised much for the role he has played. Immediately, senior BJP member Basanagouda Patil Yatnal said that Mr. Patil too had lost out on a chance, hinting at his absence from the Cabinet. Mr. Patil was quick to point out at the lost chances of Mr. Yatnal in the BJP. And the latter's reply was candid. "They have not even made me Minister. Will they make me Chief Minister? Basavaraj Rayaraddi, Lakshman Savadi and many more have lost chances of becoming Cabinet Ministers. We are all victims," he said, pointing to "injustice" done to North Karnataka legislators across parties.

Laiqh A. Khan
Sathish G.T.
Sharath S. Srivatsa

NCC camp concludes

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The 3 Karnataka Battalion of the National Cadet Corps, headquartered in Bengaluru, conducted Combined Annual Training Camp and Pre-Republic Day Camp-III (Pre-RDC-III) for 2023-24.

The camp was conducted from December 8 to 17 at the Youth Training Centre, Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, Kumbalgodu.

It saw the participation of 251 cadets, comprising 120 pre-RDC cadets, 10 Special National Integration Camp (SNIC) participants, and 121 CATC cadets.

"The scheduled activities for pre-RDC and CATC encompass a diverse range of training modules aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of the cadets. The RDC cadets underwent drill training, cultural rehearsals, specialised best cadet training, weapon training and firing exercises; while the CATC Cadets were put through drill, weapon training, firing and tent pitching practices," the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

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NOTIFICATION

This notice is published to Sri. Madhu R., Working as Junior Assistant, in BESCOM, C-6 sub Division, Bangalore, that you are absenting for duty from 13.12.2022 unauthorizedly without any intimation or prior approval from competent authority, causing which BESCOM works hampered, and you are breaking the KPTCL/BESCOM regulation. In spite of many reminders, notices, sent to your address as per Service Register, by Executive Engineer(El), Malleswaram Division by Registered post, but the post office department has sent back by living a note as "No such person" and also your whereabouts not known. Hence, your are hereby instructed to report in front of the undersigned within 15 days from the date of this notification with genuine reason and relevant documents, for your unauthorized absence, or other wise the undersigned as well as disciplinary authority will take further disciplinary action against you, as per KPTCL/BESCOM norms, i.e. termination from the service without any further notices or intimation to you.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer (El.), Bangalore North Circle and Disciplinary Authority
No. 32/1, Crescent Towers, 3rd Floor, Cresent Road, Bangalore-1.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

SAD DEMISE

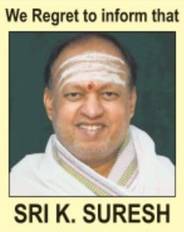
D.O.B: 07.12.1935
D.O.D: 16.12.2023

Mrs.BHARATHI SAMARAO
W/o.Late. V.N.Sama Rao, Advocate, Vellore.
Daughter in law of
Late. **V.N.Narasinga Rao**, Advocate, Vellore.
D/o.Late. **A.Subramaniya Iyer**, Advocate, Tirupattur.
Passionately called **"Annapoorani" by Ki.Va.Ja.** and "Manni" by Vallur Family Members.
-Lived as '**Exemplary Example**' for a " **Noble Soul** "
Ct: 9444518073/ 9884143206/ 9444035105
BEREAVED VALLUR FAMILY MEMBERS.

DEATH

REGRET TO inform the demise of Sri P S Vidyasankar (Ex Mysore Cements, Ammasandra) passed away on 15 Dec 23 after brief illness. The Dasastu ceremony will take place on 24 Dec 23. Mourned by family members. Mobile 94497 09052

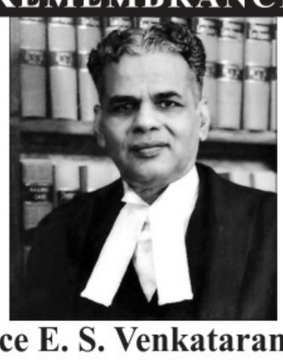
We Regret to inform that



SRI K. SURESH
of The Ghanapati YouTube channel passed away on Dec 17, 2023, in Bengaluru.
We thank his supporters who have listened and continue to listen to his Vedic chants.
Deeply Mourned by: Family and Friends
Contact: 9739781284

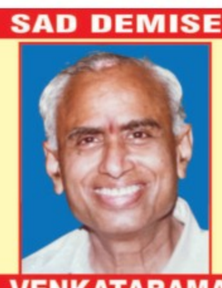
BIRTH CENTENARY

BIRTH CENTENARY REMEMBRANCE



Justice E. S. Venkataramaiah
(18.12.1924 to 25.09.1997)
Former Chief Justice of India
Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.
- H.W. Longfellow
Fondly Remembered by:
Justice B. V. Nagarathna, Sri. B. N. Gopala Krishna, Nayanatara B. G. & Prerana B. G.

SAD DEMISE



S. VENKATARAMAN
(RETD. PRINCIPAL, RBI CHENNAI)
ATTAINED SIVALOKA PRAPTHI ON 17.12.2023.
LEAVING BEHIND
Mrs.& Mr.V.Srinivasan (CUB)
Mrs.& Mr.V.Sundaresan (PNB)
Gokul,Priya,Amaresh,Shiv, Mathangi,Pratyush
PH: 9444262111 / 8420017946

IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES
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An overview of the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act

The objectives of the EU AI Act, the world's first legislation on AI, are to create a regulatory framework for AI technologies, mitigate risks associated with AI systems, and establish clear guidelines for developers, users, and regulators

Sanhita Chauriha

The European Union's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act is a significant legislative initiative aimed at regulating artificial intelligence technologies within the EU. With the growing influence of AI across various sectors, the EU seeks to strike a balance between fostering innovation and ensuring ethical and responsible AI development. The objectives of the EU AI Act are to create a regulatory framework for AI technologies, mitigate risks associated with AI systems, and establish clear guidelines for developers, users, and regulators. The act aims to ensure the responsible use of AI by protecting fundamental rights and promoting transparency in AI applications.

The strengths of the Act

One of the notable strengths of the EU AI Act is its risk-based approach. The legislation categorises AI applications into different risk levels, ranging from unacceptable to low. This approach enables tailored regulations, with higher-risk applications subject to more stringent requirements. This flexibility acknowledges AI technologies' diverse potential impact on society. It also explicitly prohibits certain AI practices deemed unacceptable, such as social credit scoring systems for government purposes, predictive policing applications, and AI systems that manipulate individuals such as emotional recognition systems at work or in education. This prohibition reflects the EU's commitment to preventing the misuse of AI technologies.

The EU AI Act emphasises transparency and accountability in AI development and deployment. It requires developers to provide clear information about the capabilities and limitations of AI systems, enabling users to make informed decisions. Additionally, the legislation mandates that developers maintain comprehensive documentation to facilitate regulatory oversight. Moreover, to ensure compliance with the regulations, the EU AI Act introduces the concept of independent conformity assessment. Higher-risk AI applications like medical devices, biometric identification, and access to justice and services, must undergo assessment processes conducted by third-party entities. This approach enhances objectivity and reduces the risk of conflicts of interest, contributing to the credibility of the regulatory framework.

The limitations

One of the criticisms of the EU AI Act is the challenge in accurately defining and categorising AI applications. The evolving nature of AI technologies may make it difficult to establish clear boundaries between different risk levels, potentially leading to uncertainties in regulatory implementation.

Critics have also argued that the stringent regulations in the EU may hinder the competitiveness of European businesses in the global AI market. While the Act aims to ensure ethical AI practices, some fear that overly restrictive measures could stifle innovation and drive AI development outside the EU. Additionally, compliance with the EU AI Act may impose a significant burden on smaller businesses and start-ups. The resources required for conformity assessments and documentation may disproportionately affect smaller players in the AI industry, potentially limiting their ability to compete with larger, more established counterparts. Striking the right balance between regulation and fostering innovation is crucial, with critics arguing that the EU AI Act may lean too heavily towards stringent controls.

The potential implications

The EU AI Act is likely to have a global impact, influencing the development and deployment of AI technologies beyond the EU's borders. As a major economic bloc, the EU's regulatory framework may set a precedent for other regions, shaping the trajectory of AI development on a global scale, just like the MiCa regulation did for crypto-assets.

By prioritising ethical considerations and fundamental rights, the EU AI Act contributes to the establishment of global norms for AI development. And the impact on innovation and competitiveness will depend on the balance struck by the EU between regulation and fostering a conducive environment for AI development.

It encourages collaboration and cooperation between regulatory authorities, fostering a unified approach to AI regulation. International collaboration in regulating AI technologies is essential to address global challenges and ensure consistent standards across borders.

The administrative side

Any individual has the right to report instances of non-compliance. The EU member states' market surveillance authorities will be responsible for enforcing the AI Act. There will be specific limits on fines applicable to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups. The EU will establish a centralised 'AI office' and 'AI Board.' In case businesses do not adhere to the EU AI Act, fines could range from $8 million to almost $38 million, depending on the nature of the violation and the company's size. For instance, fines may amount to up to 1.5% of the global annual turnover or €7.5 million for providing incorrect information, up to 3% of the global annual turnover or €15 million for general violations, and up to 7% of the global annual turnover or €35 million for prohibited AI violations.

The EU's AI Act represents a significant step towards regulating AI technologies responsibly and ethically. While it addresses key concerns associated with AI, such as transparency, accountability, and risk mitigation, there are challenges and potential drawbacks that need careful consideration. The global impact of the EU AI Act and its potential to shape international norms make it a landmark initiative in the ongoing discourse on the responsible development and deployment of artificial intelligence.

Sanhita is a Technology Lawyer.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

A quiz on lesser-known facts and trivia on the first anniversary of the FIFA World Cup that came to a close on December 18 last year

V. V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
What first did the rival managers, France's Didier Deschamps and Lionel Scaloni of Argentina, achieve when their teams took to the field for the final on December 18, 2022?

QUESTION 2
Which were the two teams involved when Referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz dished out a record 19 yellow cards, the most for a World Cup match?

QUESTION 3
If Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé took home the Golden Ball and Silver Ball respectively, which former Golden Ball winner took the honours for the third-best player?

QUESTION 4
What singular distinction, albeit dubious, did Wales' goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey achieve at the Qatar World Cup?

QUESTION 5
Though perennial favourite Brazil came a cropper again, there was cheer for the Selecao when one of its marksmen won the 'Goal of the Tournament' award. Who scored the brilliant goal?

QUESTION 6
Though six goals were scored in regulation time in the summit clash, it fell one short of the all-time record. Which final saw the champion win 5-2?

Visual question:
Name this youngster who replaced Cristiano Ronaldo in Portugal's starting XI against Switzerland and became one of the two players to score a hat-trick at Qatar. GETTY IMAGES

Questions and Answers to the December 15 edition of the daily quiz: 1. This movie was the first full-length animated feature film produced by Walt Disney. **Ans: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs***
2. This animated superhero film released in 2004 directed by this person went on to win two Academy Awards. **Ans: Brad Bird and *The Incredibles***
3. The common link between Corona, Arendelle, Agrabah, Maldonia and Atlantica. **Ans: They are all names of fictional places in which various Disney movies are set in**
4. The name of this character from *Finding Nemo* is said to be a nod to a Steven Spielberg movie. **Ans: Bruce, the shark**
5. The last film personally supervised by Walt Disney. **Ans: *The Jungle Book***
6. This character was considered a rival of Mickey Mouse. **Ans: Mortimer Mouse**
Visual: Was Wall-E is named after the legendary creator. **Ans: True. It is named after him (Walter Elias Disney)**
Early Birds: Jyotsna Kaushik| Debarati Kar| Imdadul Hossain Mallick

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

We are often canon fodder at meetings

There is a clear dichotomy between the two managers. One is easy-going while the other is strict

S. Upendran

What is the meaning and origin of 'cannon fodder'? (Koena Paul, Parganas, West Bengal)
The 'fod' in 'fodder' rhymes with 'god', 'pod' and 'mod', and the following 'er' sounds like the 'a' in 'china'. The word is pronounced 'FO-de' with the stress on the first syllable. It comes from the Old English 'fodder' meaning 'food'; in the past, it was mainly used to refer to kind of things that cows and other livestock generally ate – hay, straw, etc. Common sense suggests that the expression 'cannon fodder' should mean 'food for the cannon'. During a battle, what is it that people who operate a cannon expect the heavy piece of artillery to do? They want it to kill or seriously injure as many enemy soldiers as possible. The expression 'cannon fodder' was first used to refer soldiers who were thought to be expendable; as they were mostly inexperienced in the art of warfare, they were thought to be unimportant – soldiers who could be sacrificed. The officers that these individuals reported to looked down on them, and did not really care if they died in battle. They were, therefore, sent into situations where the odds were heavily stacked against them, and many paid the price by becoming fodder for the cannons – they were either killed or badly wounded.

The young soldiers who were ordered to charge, soon became cannon fodder.

Most of the young boys who went from our village served as nothing more than cannon fodder.

The expression has acquired a figurative meaning, and is now frequently heard being used in contexts other than the military. A person who can be easily exploited can be labelled 'cannon fodder'.

For years, the media have been using the veteran actor's links with the underworld as cannon fodder.

How is the word 'dichotomy' pronounced? (Asmita, Delhi)
The word consists of four syllables; the 'di' in the first is pronounced like the word 'die', while the following 'chot' sounds like the word 'cot'. The 'o' in the third syllable sounds like the 'a' in 'china', and the final 'y' is pronounced like the 'i' in 'pit', 'kit' and 'sit'. The word is pronounced 'die-COT-e-mi' with the stress on the second syllable. It comes from the Greek 'dikhotomia' meaning 'cutting in half' or 'cutting in two'.

When you say that there is a dichotomy between two things, what you are suggesting is that they are very different. In fact, the contrast between the two is so different that they seem to be the complete opposite. When you attempt to point out a dichotomy between two things, you draw a clear distinction between them.

I had to unlearn many of the things I'd been taught at the university. There's a dichotomy between theory and practice.

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Yawp:
make a raucous noise; complain whiningly

Synonyms: whine, grizzle, bawl

Usage: *His yawp is tolerated because he is in charge.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/yawppro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /jɔːp/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Historian's take on India's diverse, changing food culture

'While the convenience of packaged food is undeniable, especially for women who continue to disproportionately carry the burden of preparing food for the family, it comes with some repercussions'

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

A customer looks at consumable goods before buying them at a supermarket. REUTERS

When Charmaine O'Brien first came to India, back in 1995, she thought that Indian food mostly comprised of oily, spice-laden curry: the sort of food she had encountered at Indian restaurants back home in Australia. "I thought this is what people in India ate at home. I didn't know any better," she says at a recent event at the Bangalore International Centre titled *Tasting the Trends* where the writer and food historian delved into India's culinary zeitgeist.

She found herself fascinated by the diversity of India's food culture, noting that even the snacks available on a train changed a hundred-odd km down the track. "I also noticed that a lot of people felt sorry for me because I had to eat outside," she says, with a smile. People only ate outside when they were travelling and had no other choice, she noticed, venturing into a restaurant on a special occasion. This was interesting to me because, in Australia, it was all about restaurants and chefs. That was where the best food was," says Charmaine, who is known for her scholarship around both Indian and Australian cuisine. "Food at home was considered the best food."

She also mentions that most of her other books such as *Flavours Of Delhi*, *Recipes From An Urban Village* and *The Penguin Food Guide to India*, lean towards what she-for want of a better term-thinks of as traditional Indian food. "But when I was doing the Penguin Food Guide, I was also noticing how India was changing around me," says Charmaine, who recently released her latest book, *Eating the Present, Tasting the Future: Exploring India Through Her Changing Food*.

Food historian Charmaine O'Brien

An outsider looking in

Very early in the talk, Charmaine addresses what she foresees to be the elephant in the room. "I am obviously not an Indian," she says, adding that this offers both advantages and disadvantages when it comes to documenting the food of the subcontinent. For starters, as an outside observer, she believes that it allows her to notice things that someone on the inside may miss. "Because I am an outsider, I have some unique perspectives to offer," says Charmaine, who has, however, travelled extensively across India, visiting many home kitchens in the country and has an Indian partner. "I do acknowledge that because I am not Indian, I may miss nuances," she says.

Using photographs, she takes her audience into kitchens all over the country, including Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Bihar, sharing her experience of these encounters. "I have been everywhere in India and had the privilege of getting into people's homes. They were incredibly generous to me in that respect," says Charmaine. She also mentions that this interest in Indian food and its history catalysed a similar interest in Australian food history. "I was an aspiring food historian, and I didn't know about my own country's food history," she says, recalling how she grew up in the 1950s, eating a lot of meat, bread and cabbage. "I didn't think there was anything to see there. I didn't think Australia had a food history."

Part of the reason for that, of course, is that despite being home to people from different backgrounds, "our general food culture is not that diverse," she says, pointing out that Australian food systems are largely industrialised with most people buying their food in similar-looking supermarkets. "There is no different embedded food culture because every food we eat in Australia, with a couple of exceptions (such as macadamia nuts and seafood), comes from somewhere else," says Charmaine. According to her, the Australian food history of the 19th century is very linked to the British food history of the same time. "This is tied to the Industrial Revolution that created a lot of significant change in Britain. Australia is kind of a product of that," she says. She also says that she has noticed a similar socio-cultural change happening in India over the last few decades. "I wanted to capture that. This is an amazing story."

A changing food culture

"No power on Earth can stop an idea whose time has come."

This line, written by the French Romantic writer Victor Hugo and uttered by Manmohan Singh at the end of his 1991 Budget speech that marked India's shift to a market economy, also could be applied to India's shifting food culture, as Charmaine implies.

She still remembers what things were like when she visited and lived in the country. "There was still a socialist-style economy, and you couldn't get a lot of things." Even something like packaged yoghurt was not available back then in local shops; one had to go to a halwai to get yoghurt. She recalls a friend telling her that everyone made it at home, something she began doing as well. "Packaged yoghurt is the fastest growing dairy product in India today," she points out, adding that changes in India's food culture she has noticed are the following: more homogenised snacks at railway stations, a vibrant eating-out and ordering-in culture, a glut of cake shops with myriad offerings and a burgeoning local cheese, chocolate and wine industry, among other things, points out Charmaine. She believes that travel, exposure, more disposable income and even cooking shows like Master Chef have played a significant role in this transformation. "None of this happens on its own; it is all interrelated," she says, adding that multiple things influence consumer behaviour.

Idea of super foods

"We can change it in many ways," she says, offering the example of millets. Though the grain is today being touted as a superfood and has attained undeniably nationalistic undertones, this was not always so, she says, recalling an incident with a friend who called it poor people's food. "What has happened? Have millets changed?" she asks.

According to her, while the food stays the same, it is the messaging around it that has gone through a complete overhaul, fuelled by the global trend in wellness that has come out of the U.S. While it does mean that people are more open to the many nutrition benefits offered by millet, and it is fast losing the "poor person food" tag, the superfood narrative is deeply problematic in Charmaine's opinion. "Superfoods distort food systems, distort how people see food," she says. "There is no such thing as a superfood. All natural, unprocessed foods are good for you in different ways, and that is why you need to eat a variety of food."

while the convenience of packaged food is undeniable, especially for women who continue to disproportionately carry the burden of preparing food for the family, it comes with some repercussions.

Extra packaging material, for instance, today so ubiquitous, ends up clogging landfills, for instance, she says, showing her audience a picture of a supermarket filled with plastic-shrouded vegetables. "When I was in Delhi, the sabziwallah would come to the front door. You can't get more convenient than that, and there was no plastic," she recalls. Some of the other significant

'Indira Canteens suffer from neglect, simple interventions can help improve the situation'

Indira Canteens was one of the most popular programmes introduced during the previous Siddaramaiah-led Congress government

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Indira canteen, near Askok pillar in Jayanagar.

People having food in Indira canteen at K.R. market bus stand.

Simple interventions can help improve quality of Indira Canteens, says Reetika Khera, economist and professor at IIT-Delhi. She was speaking at the Alternative Law Forum in Bengaluru on her findings from studies conducted at Indira Canteens in Karnataka and Indira Rasois in Rajasthan.

"The Indira Canteens are suffering from neglect. They have been scaled down in some places where they are not serving all meals," Ms. Khera pointed out. She also noted that the lack of variety on the menu was also a pretty serious issue.

What can be done?

"There's a whole range of very simple interventions that can take it much forward. For example, boiled eggs as an optional item for those who want to top up their meal and make it more nutritious. Providing ragi for a meal is another option. They can also go one step further and offer non-vegetarian dishes like chicken," she said drawing from examples like the 'Popular Restaurant Programme' in Brazil where nutritious meal including fish are provided for nominal prices. While Indira Canteens was one of the most popular programmes introduced during the previous Siddaramaiah-led Congress government, the eateries fell victim to political changes and negligence after the BJP government came into power.

Although the revival of the canteens was much anticipated after Congress came back to power again earlier this year, it seems to have been put in the backburner for now.

Location an issue

Ms. Khera pointed out that the location of the Indira Canteens also contribute to the issue.

"The Indira Canteens are pleasant spaces to eat

While under 200 meals were served in Indira Canteens per day, the number is much higher in Rajasthan

at, whereas in Rajasthan they are located at strategic locations such as near hospitals or bus stands which are heavily crowded," she noted.

"In Rajasthan they have put a lot of thought into where to locate the canteens. Whereas here since they were looking for nice spaces often the canteens are located just off a busy road and people don't know it is there. I think that affects the footfall at these canteens," she added. Decentralised model

While under 200 meals were served in Indira Canteens per day, the number is much higher in Rajasthan. Ms. Khera also noted that the Indira Rasois are fairly spread out, whereas in Karnataka majority of them are concentrated in Bengaluru and only a few are located in other places.

Ms. Khera's suggestions also included moving from a centralised cooking model to a decentralised one.

"The food becomes cold by the time it reaches from the kitchen to the canteens and there is no facility for reheating. The decentralised model is also less transparent," she said. While she highlighted that a very few women customers visited the canteens, she acknowledged that the community kitchens have a gender dimension which is not very apparent. The burden of cooking in most homes falls on the women.

Community kitchens, in a sense, ease this when men choose to eat at the canteens. It also plays a role in financial empowerment and self-reliance of women as many workers employed at these kitchens are women, Ms Khera pointed out.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 18, 1973

Stray Incidents in Karnataka

Bangalore, Dec. 17: The anti-Maharashtrian agitation in Karnataka was marked by stray incidents of violence in some parts of the State on the 12th day to-day.

According to the reports reaching police headquarters here there would be no curfew in Hubli city, which was under curfew for the last three nights.

Barring these incidents, the situation in the rest of the State was completely normal, police said.

Police rounded up 44 persons including 26 Anna DMK volunteers when they held demonstrations in Bangalore City in violation of the prohibitory orders.

A group of Kannada Paksha volunteers were taken into custody when they demonstrated in front of a theatre in Ulsoor (Bangalore) in protest against the screening of a Maharashtra made Hindi film.

Ban Order in Ranebennur

Hubli, Dec. 17: Prohibitory orders under Section 144 Cr. P.C. have been clamped on Ranebennur town, 110 kilometers from here following disturbances this morning.

A group of persons shouting anti-Maharashtra slogans took out a procession to-day to protest against the alleged atrocities committed on Kannadigas in Maharashtra. Some of the processionists started pelting stones on some of the houses when the police made a Lathi charge and later burst teargas shells to disperse the mob which was setting unruly.

The students of Ranebennur town have called off their agitation from tomorrow.

CITYBEATS

Grills for the winter

ON GOING
Sanchez unveils a winter grill menu which offers a range of seafood, chicken and meat grills with a range of vegetarian options.
These come served with sour cream, totopos, and corn on the cob. And the desserts for the season is the hotel's spice winter pie.
Sanchez, is in UB City, Vittal Mallya Road

Christmas brunch

DECEMBER 24, 25
Monkey Bar presents a Christmas Eve party and Christmas Day brunch. The event will also feature music by DJ Gaurav, known for his house music and diverse repertoire ranging from 70s and 80s classics to modern rock and disco. Food will include Malabar egg roast, *nati*-style mutton *kheema* ball and *methi*-spiced prawn.
Monkey Bar, Museum Road, can be contacted on 8655464500 or 8976590222.

Oriental dishes

ON GOING
Chowman has an oriental duck festival 2023. The menu introduces 12 new dishes alongside the restaurant's signature duck meat platter. Duck meat soup with oyster mushrooms, appetisers, roasted duck bao, and Thai style aromatic duck will be available.
Food is priced at ₹1,100 upwards.

Strength, discipline, gold

From lifting weights in her parents' gym this summer to clinching four medals at an international event, Surya Radhakrishnan's rise in powerlifting has been super-swift

Praveen Sudevan

Surya Radhakrishnan started training at her parents' gym in Bengaluru this summer. With her father, Vivek, being a national-level cyclist and mother, Namu, a triathlete, she too was keen to pick up a sport. Namu found her daughter to be innately strong. So, she let her train with their gym trainer. Surya slid into the gym routine like a smoothly turning key in a well-oiled lock – effortlessly fitting into each workout and occasionally unlocking new challenges. Her parents and coach were surprised by her swift progress. Soon, she was lifting the weights her father was lifting.

Even they would not have expected her to win a medal at an international event within a few months of starting her training. But Surya, last month, won four gold medals in the teenagers (female), 60 kg category at the World Powerlifting Congress/Amateur World Powerlifting Congress (WPC/AWPC) Open World Cup in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

The turning point came when Surya's mother discovered a post on Instagram featuring Noah Eappen, a girl her age, who had triumphed at the earlier edition of the same event. The spark ignited,

No weighty issue Surya Radhakrishnan. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

leading to a connection with coach Azzy, who saw the potential in Surya and guided her into the world of powerlifting.

"I started lifting pretty heavy weights, the same as my father. I learned about powerlifting, and my coach Azzy guided me as he believed I had good potential," says Surya.

At 14, what propels Surya is not just the thrill of lifting heavy weights; it is the joy she finds in constant improvement.

Encouraged by her coaches and family, she navigates a demanding schedule that includes training three days a week before school and longer sessions at Azzy's gym in the evenings.

The commute is exhausting, but Surya's commitment to the sport remains unwavering.

"Winning medals has been motivating. But I enjoy the process as well," says Surya.

The "process" of waking up at 4.30am, training, then going to school, training again, and resting to be ready for the next day might not sound enjoyable. But she likes it because the sport teaches her things she can apply to other areas of life.

"It has made me disciplined. I have to wake up early and stick to my routines, only then can I achieve my goals."

"It has also taught me that progress is not linear. Sometimes, you might struggle with a lift that you usually find manageable. But it is part of the process and does not mean a lack of progress or ability. The next day, you might surprise yourself by lifting a heavier weight. So, you can have setbacks. But they need not stop your journey," she adds.

The balancing act between school commitments and powerlifting is tough. However, she squeezes in workouts before school, completes homework outside her gym schedule, and prioritizes sleep and nutrition to ensure optimal recovery.

But all these discomforts paid off when she stood atop the podium in Bishkek adorned with four gold medals.

"It is probably my proudest accomplishment ever," she says.Surya says about her plans with powerlifting, "Well, I am going to keep training and trying my best. Whatever competition my coach says to do, I'll try to qualify. I want to do this for at least one or two more years. So, I'll see where that takes me."

A touch of class

A welcome addiction A good section of people are still into promoting and reading books. MURALI KUMAR K

Ruth Dhanaraj

The term 'classic' literature conjures up images of sepia-tinted pages, long-drawn out plot lines and a teacher droning away on a midsummer's day. Whether it is Dickens or Dostoevsky, Salinger or Shakespeare, there is a reason classics never go out of style – they are enduring pieces of art that have withstood the passage of time.

It is this timelessness that has seen Blossom Book House, one of the more popular second hand book-stores in the city open a third store on Church Street – a stretch with perhaps the most number of bookshops per square feet in the city.

What sets this location apart is that it has an exclusive section for Penguin Classics, says Mayi Gowda, founder and owner of Blossoms.

The venue is part of the Penguin Classics festival, an initiative to not only reintroduce classics to the reading public, but also acquaint them with authors they may have not explored before.

"While this has been an annual event for the past five years , this is the first time it has been extended for three months, instead of the usual one," says Mayi. Unlike the usual USP of the store, all the titles in this series are new and not pre-owned, he adds.

With as many as 2,000 different titles available at this venue, there are bound to be authors such as Yukio Mishima, Georges Simenon, Ismail Kadare, Mikhail Bulgakov and others from different countries, eras and genres, waiting to be discovered.

According to Manoj Satti, Group Vice President - International Product & Marketing, Penguin Random House India, the aim of this initiative was to showcase the wide range of classic literature and not just the well-known ones. "Instead of allocating just one bookshelf of a store to classics, we thought a place such as this would have more of an impact. Hopefully, these other titles will pique the interest of readers who walk in. "

The team at the publishing house plans to have volunteers at these locations engage with potential customers about the merits of titles on display. "It is one thing to explore new material on your own, but if you have somebody who can guide you to selecting the sort of books you enjoy reading, it is better," says Manoj. The Penguin Classics festival is currently operational in Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru.

Follow them on social media for updates on activities in your city.

Pursuit of happiness Hattamalar Oparey will not only entertain children and adults but also get them thinking. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Going beyond boundaries through theatre

Navya Naveli

Bangalore Little Theatre commenced staging its annual children's production *Beyond Hattamala* across the city, starting December 15. Directors Murtuza Khety and Deepak Mote have chosen to present an English adaptation of Badal Sircar's Bengali play *Hattamalar Oparey (Beyond Hattamala)*.

Murtuza says he was fascinated by this play. "Producing this play has been on the top of my list as it talks about doing what makes one happy and how chasing money is not everything in life."

The play has been kept as minimalistic as possible, . Deepak explains: "The stage has been kept open for audiences to see what unfolds. This is so they too feel that they are a part of the play."

The play will not only entertain both children and adults, but will also get them thinking, believes Murtaza, who adds: "It is set in a utopian world that resonates with children as they still have not started thinking of worldly matters and enjoy everything. It will make adults think about their own state of happiness, lifestyles, and if they want to make any new choices in their lives."

Founded in 1960, Bangalore Little Theatre has contributed immensely to the city's theatrical landscape, consistently supporting charitable causes. The Shaping Lives program by The Academy of Theatre Arts, BLT (ATA) focuses on underprivileged children.

"We work with organisations that serve the underprivileged. These children go through stress, anger issues, substance abuse, family and interpersonal issues, which affect them negatively. We have been working with these schools and conduct life skill-related sessions for the mental well-being of children," says the duo.

Beyond Hattamala will be staged across Bengaluru till January 27, 2024. Tickets available on bookmyshow. For a schedule of performances, log on to bangalorelittletheatre.org

Kerala Governor and student outfit get into tussle over banners at Calicut University

Enraged by the banners put up by CPI(M)-backed SFI against him on the campus, Khan pulls up police for 'insult' and ensures removal of some of them; he summons Vice-Chancellor; SFI activists raise banners again and take out march; outfit likely to continue protest at the university today

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

The stand-off between Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and the ruling CPI(M)-backed Students Federation of India (SFI) at the University of Calicut in Malappuram district escalated to dramatic scenes on Sunday night, with Mr. Khan forcing the police to remove some banners put up against him on the campus and the SFI activists erecting them again.

There were no untoward incidents at the university till evening as the SFI did not stage any protest against Mr. Khan, who stayed at the guest house for the second consecutive day. Hundreds of police personnel continued to stay put on the campus.

In the afternoon, he objected to banners against him put up on the campus. The banners read 'Chancellor go back', 'Sanghi Chancellor *wapas jao*'.

He was seen asking Raj Bhavan officials to instruct the university Vice-Chancellor to take steps to remove them. However, the banners remained there till the evening. Since it was a holiday, university officials were not in offices and the police reportedly did not wish to enter the campus without a directive from the Vice-Chancellor.

Not relenting: A banner raised by SFI activists against the Governor on the Calicut University campus on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

This apparently infuriated Mr. Khan, who came out of the guest house around 7 p.m. and shouted at the police officials, including Malappuram Superintendent of Police S. Sasidharan. "Don't think you will go unaccountable... Is the SFI running the university? They will put banners and you will have them there," he said. Calling the police "shameless people", he asked them, "You want to insult me. If the Chief Minister is staying here, will you allow this?"

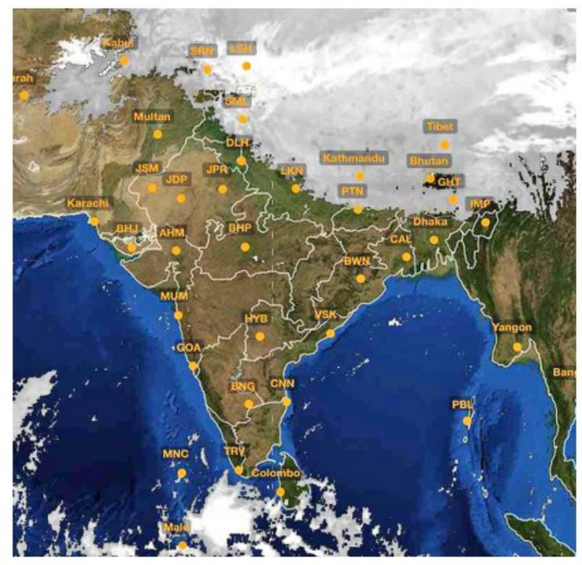
Mr. Khan also said that this Chief Minister was not going to remain there forever. He then ensured that all the banners in the vicinity were removed. He also summoned Vice-Chancellor M.K. Jayaraj to the guest house and spoke to him.

Soon after, SFI leaders arrived and entered into an argument with the police. Later, they raised banners saying 'Mister Chancellor, this is Kerala', and 'Down down Chancellor'. A protest march too was taken out and slogans were written on the road.

The SFI is likely to continue its protest when the Governor opens a seminar on the campus on Monday evening.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely at isolated places over south Tamil Nadu. Heavy rainfall is very likely at isolated places over south Kerala and Lakshadweep. Thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds are very likely at isolated places over Lakshadweep

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	26.0	13.0	Kozhikode	—	33.0	26.0
Ahmedabad	—	29.0	14.0	Kurnool	—	31.0	21.0
Aizawl	—	20.0	9.0	Lucknow	—	24.0	10.0
Allahabad	—	26.0	10.0	Madurai	0.2	31.0	23.0
Bengaluru	—	26.0	19.0	Mangaluru	—	33.0	24.0
Bhopal	—	25.0	11.0	Mumbai	—	32.0	22.0
Bhubaneswar	—	28.0	13.0	Mysuru	—	30.0	21.0
Chandigarh	—	23.0	8.0	New Delhi	—	25.0	6.0
Chennai	0.5	30.0	25.0	Patna	—	25.0	9.0
Coimbatore	1.0	31.0	23.0	Port Blair	—	32.0	26.0
Dehradun	—	23.0	6.0	Puducherry	—	29.0	24.0
Gangtok	—	15.0	8.0	Pune	—	29.0	18.0
Goa	—	34.0	23.0	Raipur	—	27.0	11.0
Guwahati	—	26.0	12.0	Ranchi	—	24.0	8.0
Hubballi	—	30.0	20.0	Shillong	—	17.0	6.0
Hyderabad	—	28.0	16.0	Shimla	—	17.0	6.0
Imphal	—	23.0	8.0	Srinagar	0.4	9.0	1.0
Jaipur	—	25.0	11.0	Thiruvananthapuram	21.0	25.0	23.0
Kochi	—	30.0	26.0	Tiruchi	9.0	30.0	23.0
Kohima	—	16.0	4.0	Vijayawada	—	29.0	21.0
Kolkata	—	25.0	14.0	Visakhapatnam	—	29.0	22.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	4	7	7	166	147	
Bengaluru	4	31	51	57	99	
Chennai	13	43	84	64	58	
Delhi	19	106	43	434	385	
Hyderabad	7	24	56	180	—	
Kolkata	16	91	17	286	180	
Lucknow	9	60	107	249	206	
Mumbai	13	59	17	206	165	
Pune	124	193	109	285	153	
Visakhapatnam	16	44	39	143	124	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Katihar, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 391 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 23.

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Telangana CM meets Raghuram Rajan

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Focusing his attention on the State's financial situation, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy held a meeting with former Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan on Sunday.

The Chief Minister explained to Mr. Rajan the State's current economic condition and discussed the strategies that need to be adopted for accelerated growth. Mr. Rajan met the Chief Minister at the latter's residence and shared his experiences in the field of economics. Mr. Rajan, a former chief financial adviser to the Union government, is said to have made suggestions for improving the economic situation of the State, according to a press release.

Raghuram Rajan

Get all details of money spent on Kaleshwaram, Revanth tells officials

Directive comes a day after he announced a probe into leakage, sinking of piers at barrages

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Making clear the intention of the government to 'expose' the irregularities in the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy held a meeting with Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and senior officials at his residence, reviewing the latest developments across the irrigation sector.

The meeting comes a day after the Chief Minister announced in the Legislative Council that an investigation headed by a sitting High Court Judge would be ordered into the sinking of piers of the Medigadda barrage and the leakage in the Annaram barrage of the project. He also said the government would take all MLAs and MLCs for an examination of the Medigadda and Annaram barrages.

In the meeting on Sunday, the Chief Minister is said to have asked the Engineer-in-Chief of the Telangana Irrigation and Command Area Development Department, C. Muralidhar, to get the entire details of costs involved in the Kaleshwaram project, which was launched and inaugurated by the former BRS government.

The refusal of L&T to take up the repairs on the Medigadda barrage unless a new agreement is signed was discussed, with the Chief Minister seeking details on how it was let go from its responsibility. It's quite intriguing that L&T, which said it would repair the pillars when they sunk in October, is now claiming that the agreement has lapsed. The CM wanted to understand how such an important clause of maintenance and repairs was left open to the advantage of the company rather than the government.

The lapses in the project construction that led to pillars caving in at the Medigadda barrage and the reasons for it were also discussed. Both the Chief Minister and the Minister went into the design issues and the role of engineers in the project design and construction as the government spent enormous money on the three barrages.

Rain in the hills

With heavy rain in the Sabarimala pilgrimage zone on Sunday, devotees, workers and others slipped into rain coats and wielded umbrellas for protection. A scene from Sabaripeedam along the traditional trekking path from Pampa in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district. LEJU KAMAL

Three from Karnataka killed in road accident

The Hindu Bureau
ANANTAPUR

Three persons died on the spot and one was critically injured when a mini-lorry rammed into a parked lorry at Chennampalle village in Anantapur Rural mandal in the early hours of Sunday.

The mini-lorry was on its way to Kalyanadurgam from Ballari when it rammed into the stationary lorry as the driver could not see it due to thick fog. Among the deceased was Praveen, the driver of the mini-lorry.

The identity of the other two deceased was yet to be confirmed.

The lorry was parked as one of the wheels was punctured and the person who was repairing it sustained critical injuries in the accident. All the deceased were from Hiriyur town of Chitradurga district. The bodies have been sent for autopsy.

Attibele fire: Prime accused booked for cheating, forgery

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The prime accused in the Attibele cracker godown fire case has also been booked for cheating and forgery after the district administration found him submitting forged documents of the licence.

Based on the findings, K.A. Dayananda, Deputy Commissioner (Bengaluru Urban), filed a complaint with the Attibele police recently.

The police have registered another case against Ramaswamy V. Reddy, owner of Balaji Traders, charging him under various section of Explosives Act, and for cheating and forgery for further investigation. Mr. Dayananda, in his complaint, said that after the fire accident, the district administration had initiated a probe and sought the copies of the licence from the accused.

The accused had submitted the copies of the licence which revealed that the police and the Fire and Emergency Services had issued No Objection Certificates.

Based on this, the district administration, which is the licensing authority, issued the licence to store and sell fire crackers to Reddy. However, the licence that he submitted post the accident has now been found to be forged.

The licence belongs to Rajashekhar, based on an application in 2020, the FIR alleges. However, it is not clear as to why Reddy who does hold a licence in his name, submitted an allegedly forged document to the department.

Tensions in Kannur village after Karnataka Forest Dept. claims ownership of area

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

Forest guards have restricted access to the jeep route inside the Makkoottam Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary

A tense situation prevails on the forest fringes along the Kerala-Karnataka boundary near the Barapole river in Ayyankunnu grama panchayat in Kannur following a stand-off between local people and the Karnataka Forest Department.

On Sunday, an action council, comprising residents and supported by political parties and social activists, decided to plough and clear the disputed land. The council says it will challenge what it deems an illegitimate claim by the Karnataka Forest Department that the area is in Karnataka's jurisdiction.

Local people say the Karnataka authorities are preventing families from engaging in agricultural and developmental activities in the area. Residents accuse the Makkoottam Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary authorities of uprooting and destroying cassava crops grown by a local resident recently.

These families, residing in the area since 1958, accuse the Kerala government authorities of neglecting them. They say they have Aadhaar, land deeds, and have been paying taxes to the panchayat. They say they are facing eviction threat from Karnataka forest guards.

Adding to the challenges, forest guards have restricted access to the jeep route inside the Makkoottam Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, compelling families to cross the Barapole river by raft to reach the Palathumkadavu-Kacherikadavu road for access to town.

Launch of Seattle-Bengaluru flight of American Airlines indefinitely postponed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

When announced in early 2020, the scheduled flight between Seattle and Bengaluru of American Airlines was supposed to be the first non-stop one between the city and the United States.

However, nearly four years later, the launch of this service, which was expected to meet corporate passengers' demand for travel to Seattle and adjoining areas in the US, remains indefinitely postponed.

In February 2020, American Airlines said it planned to operate a 285-seater Boeing 787-9 aircraft on the Seattle-Bengaluru route. AP

Original schedule

Originally scheduled to commence in October 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic put a break on its operations as only flights under the air bubble arrangements were allowed to operate on the international routes.

Though the Ministry of Civil Aviation opened up the international airspace on March 27, 2022, this route remained a non-starter due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent ban imposed by the US government over flying over Russian airspace.

American Airlines said that the safety of its customers and team members is the airline's top priority and that as the Seattle-Bengaluru route requires its flights to fly over an airspace that is involved in a military conflict the route remains a non-starter.

Safety issue

"American Airlines has indefinitely postponed the launch of scheduled service between Seattle and Bengaluru, India. The safety of our customers and team members is America's top priority. As this route requires flying through airspace currently involved in a military conflict, we postponed the flight out of an abundance of caution," an American Airlines spokesperson told *The Hindu*.

A senior official from the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) said that flights between the two cities are unlikely to start any time soon as it would not be viable for US carriers to take a longer route by avoiding the Russian airspace.

When announced in February 2020, American Airlines said that it planned to operate a 285-seater Boeing 787-9 aircraft on this route.

BIAL had forecast that this new route would give passengers easier and faster access to San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Denver, Arizona, Dallas, Chicago, West Coast, and East states on a one-stop flight as compared to multiple stop overs in the past. In 2021, Air India became the first airline to operate a non-stop flight between Bengaluru and the US when it launched a service to San Francisco.

New order

BJP hopes to retain a diverse support base with its pick of State leaders

By elevating debutant Member of the Legislative Assembly Bhajan Lal Sharma as the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sought to reassure the Brahmin community, its strongest support base across regions. Having cut his teeth in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, at the grassroots, Mr. Sharma has risen overnight to the top seat, which is also a signal to the cadre of the party that anything is achievable in the BJP. The new power structure also means the sidelining of the old guard, including Vasundhara Raje, the first woman Chief Minister of the State who held the post for two terms. What is in store for her remains unclear. Mr. Sharma is the second Brahmin Chief Minister of the BJP in Rajasthan; the party has also appointed Deputy Chief Ministers from the community in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The BJP considered it wise to comfort its core upper caste base to balance its continuing pivot to Other Backward Classes (OBC) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Diya Kumari, a Rajput and Prem Chand Bairwa, who hails from a Dalit community, are the Deputy Chief Ministers, consolidating its rainbow caste coalition in Rajasthan. There are 29 berths in the Council of Ministers to be filled. Gujjars and Jats among the OBC community and tribals of Rajasthan would expect representation. Mr. Sharma has to keep the party flock together; that he was handpicked by Mr. Modi gives him the strength to do so. The BJP campaign was centred around what was labelled 'Modi's Guarantees'.

The BJP has promised a lot to voters and Mr. Sharma now has the responsibility to fulfil them. A special investigation team to probe paper leaks during the previous Congress regime, establishment of women police stations, appointment of 2.5 lakh government employees, and a subsidy of ₹450 per LPG cylinder for Ujjwala scheme beneficiaries were among the campaign promises of the BJP. The party has also promised a ₹2 lakh savings bond for each girl child. Mr. Sharma has to deal with a complicated fiscal environment, avoid a conflict with the party old guard, and balance the social equations in the State. The new Chief Minster has inspired enthusiasm among party workers and people alike, and the BJP central leadership will likely expect him to be in control well ahead of the Lok Sabha election in April-May. He will also have to safeguard the trust endowed in him by the central leadership. Mr. Sharma, who has no previous experience in government, may have to rely on an efficient set of political and bureaucratic advisers as he grapples with political and governance challenges.

A cloudy horizon

Latest trade data underscore the criticality of competitiveness

From a rare upward swing this October, India's goods exports retreated into contraction last month, dipping 2.8% from 2022 levels to touch $33.9 billion. Imports dropped 4.33% to $54.5 billion, cooling the merchandise trade deficit to $20.6 billion, almost a third below October's record high. Sequentially, the decline in imports was sharp, despite the Commerce Ministry lowering October's import bill by $1.6 billion from the initial $65 billion estimate. On the other hand, though exports contracted in November, they were higher than October's tally, which was the lowest in 12 months, yet denoted a year-on-year uptick unlike in November. Such statistical noise may be hard to listen through, but it is clear that exports have recorded their weakest values in a year, over the last two months. Similarly, the significant dip in imports in November can be attributed to factors like a decline in discretionary demand for high-value goods such as gems and jewellery and the global dip in prices of key items like petroleum products. Economists expect the deficit to stay range-bound between $20 billion and 25 billion through the remaining four months of the year. But it is difficult to be certain – one may recall that imports had hit an 11-month high of $60.1 billion in August before easing over 10% in September and resurging in October.

Making sense of such divergences, with a yo-yo effect of sorts every other month, is hazardous, and is exacerbated by significant data corrections that have returned after a few months of relative certainty. August's goods trade deficit was moderated by nearly three billion dollars, with the overall export-import tally seeing revisions of $5 billion. The magnitude of upward revision in the monthly merchandise trade deficit has averaged around $1.5 billion since July compared to an average of $0.5 billion in the first quarter of 2023-24, a QuantEco research note has flagged. At the risk of repeating the obvious, the government must get a better grip on the data it bases its decisions on. Officials hope for an uptick in exports in the final quarter of the year, citing similar trends in recent years. With the World Trade Organization expecting global trade flows to strengthen in 2024 and the US Federal Reserve signalling interest rate cuts that other central banks would take a cue from, global demand may perhaps look up more consistently. But to capture that, India needs to do more to compete with rivals. For instance, a rough government-commissioned study on logistics costs indicates they dropped a little over the past decade. Ongoing infrastructure spends may gradually lower them further, but reducing petroleum prices for users, in tandem with global trends, would boost competitiveness far more effectively.

An uphill struggle to grow the Forest Rights Act

On December 18, 2006, the Rajya Sabha endorsed the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, enacted by the Lok Sabha. This Act, commonly known as the Forest Rights Act, or FRA, marks a watershed in India's socio-environmental legislation, as it attempts to put an end to the long-drawn conflict over supposed 'forest encroachments'. Simultaneously, it seeks to create a much more democratic, bottom-up forest governance.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the FRA has been plagued by political opportunism, forester resistance and bureaucratic apathy, and the discourse around it by deliberate canards and misconceptions. Hence, 17 years after it was enacted, the FRA has barely begun to deliver on its promise of freeing forest-dwellers from historic injustices and democratising forest governance. To understand why this is so, we must first delve into what it sought to do and how.

Sharachchandra Lele

is a Distinguished Fellow at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bengaluru, an Adjunct Professor at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Pune, and an Honorary Professor at Shiv Nadar University (SNU) Delhi

Historic injustices

Prior to colonialism, local communities enjoyed customary rights over forests in their vicinity or even a large region. Even when kings or chieftains claimed (say) hunting rights in certain forests, local communities continued to enjoy all other forest benefits. The colonial takeover of India's forests, however, resulted in a massive disruption of these traditions. Based on the false idea of 'eminent domain' (that the ruler always owns all property), the 1878 (colonial) Indian Forest Act was passed and the takeover of India's forests began. The Imperial Forest Department was established to harvest and transform the forest to maximise timber and revenue, and was also tasked with protecting 'state' property against local communities, now deemed trespassers.

The injustices imposed by this colonial forest policy took multiple forms. First, now that forests were seen as primarily a timber resource, shifting cultivation was banned. Second, the so-called survey and settlement of agricultural lands was incomplete and biased in favour of the state. Third, simultaneously, to ensure labour for forestry operations, 'forest villages' were created, wherein forest land was leased for agriculture to (mostly Adivasi) households in return for compulsory (virtually bonded) labour. Fourth, since forests were now state property, all access to forest produce was limited, temporary and chargeable, and always at the mercy of the forest bureaucracy that was armed with police powers. Any concessions to local livelihood needs were termed 'privileges' that could be modified or withdrawn any time. Fifth, even where access was permitted, the local community had no right to manage the forest, as the state logged valuable forests and made heavily used forest de facto open-access.

Unfortunately, matters only worsened post-Independence. In the hurry to assimilate princely States and *zamindari* estates into the Union, their forest areas were declared state property without proper inquiry into who was residing in them. Legitimate residents and cultivators became 'encroachers' overnight. Later, forest lands were leased out under the 'Grow More Food' campaign and other initiatives to meet the needs of a growing population, but were never 'regularised'. Communities displaced by dams were not given alternative lands, and ended up 'encroaching' forest land elsewhere. And, forest exploitation continued as in colonial times, but in the name of national interest.

> Political opportunism, forester resistance and bureaucratic apathy have affected the Act which seeks to create a more democratic structure of forest governance

The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 (FCA), again conceived within the framework of eminent domain, became the sixth and seventh forms of injustice. Lakhs of communities were forcibly resettled when creating sanctuaries and national parks. And in 'diverting' forests for development projects, neither were the views or consent of local communities taken into consideration, nor, in spite of imposing hefty Net Present Value fees on the project, were the local communities compensated for the impact on their livelihoods.

The FRA is remarkable because it first of all acknowledges these historical (colonial) injustices and their continuation post-Independence. Redress then takes three broad forms. The issue of so-called 'encroachments' is addressed through recognising individual forest rights (IFRs) to continue habitation and cultivation or other activities that existed before December 2005. Forest villages are to be converted into revenue villages after full rights recognition. The issue of access and control is addressed by recognising the rights of village communities to access and use forests and to own and sell minor forest produce, and, most importantly, to manage forests within their customary boundaries, including in sanctuaries and national parks. This is the most far-reaching provision in the FRA, as it ensures decentralised forest governance, linking management authority and responsibility to community rights.

Finally, the Act lays down a democratic procedure for identifying whether and where wildlife conservation may require curtailing or extinguishing community rights. Simultaneously, having community rights over a forest translates *ipso facto* into the community having a say in, if not veto over, any diversion of that forest and a right to compensation if diverted. This right was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in the Niyamgiri case, and although the Forest Conservation Rules 2022 and FCA Amendment 2023 seek to bypass this right, States can still put in place such consent mechanisms.

Distortions in implementation

Unfortunately, the politicians in most States focused solely on individual rights and projected the Act as an 'encroachment regularisation' scheme. Some even encouraged illegal new cultivation in a few pockets. But even the recognition of IFRs was done rather shabbily, compromised by Forest Department resistance, the apathy and ignorance of other departments, and misuse of technology. Claimants were put through enormous hardship during claim-filing, subjected to faulty and non-transparent rejections and (equally important) arbitrary partial recognition (thereby getting tagged as 'approved' claims). Imposing absurd digital processes in areas with poor connectivity and literacy, such as the VanMitra software in Madhya Pradesh, is just a continuation of injustice. Even the open-and-shut case of 'forest villages' has not been addressed in most States.

But the biggest lacuna in FRA implementation is the extremely slow and incomplete recognition of community rights to access and manage forests (loosely, community forest rights or CFRs). The (still colonially structured) forest bureaucracy is vehemently opposed to these rights, as it stands to lose its *zamindari*: our estimates show that 70%-90% of the forests in central India should be under CFRs. The other departments and political representatives can only visualise forest-dwellers as 'labharthis' (beneficiaries of state largesse), not as autonomous users and managers of their own forests.

Maharashtra, Odisha, and, more recently, Chhattisgarh, are the only States to recognise CFRs substantially. But only Maharashtra has enabled their activation by de-nationalising minor forest produce, at least in Scheduled Areas, resulting in at least a thousand villages managing their own forests. Even here, illegal non-recognition of community rights in densely forested potential mining areas has led to protest and unrest.

The non-recognition of community rights is convenient to the hardline conservationists and the development lobby alike: communities in Protected Areas are then precariously placed and easy targets for 'voluntary rehabilitation', and forests can be handed over for mining or dams without community consent.

Fathom the FRA's intent

As political regimes change and the memory of the struggle that led to the passage of this Act fades, calls for shutting down the FRA's implementation have emerged. Simultaneously, some States have talked of 'saturating' rights recognition in mission mode. However, as examples from Chhattisgarh show, mission mode implementation invariably plays into the hands of the Forest Department, leading to distorted rights recognition and reinstatement of technocratic control. Unless political leaders, bureaucrats and environmentalists all appreciate the spirit and the intent of the FRA, the historical injustices will remain unaddressed, forest governance will remain highly undemocratic, and the enormous potential for community-led forest conservation and sustainable livelihoods will remain unrealised.

The views expressed are personal

The stormy Red Sea, the complexities of global events

At the end of October, after the audacious terror attack by Hamas against Israel, which has upended a renewed sense of regional stability, the Yemen-based and Iran-aligned Houthi militia announced that it would join the war to support the people of Gaza. This brought the critical waterways of the Red Sea, which connects the Suez Canal, into the middle of the conflict. The Suez by itself carries nearly 15% of all global trade between the West and the East.

In mid-November, the Houthis released a video of armed men in a helicopter raiding a cargo vessel that reportedly had Israeli links, which was travelling through the Red Sea towards India. While the Strait of Hormuz on the other side of the region, bordering Iran, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, and Qatar, is seen as a major geopolitical chokepoint, the Red Sea is increasingly being seen as an alternative. Saudi Arabia's new futuristic city of Neom, a pet project of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman which represents the rapidly changing face of the kingdom, is based off the coast of the Red Sea from where vast amounts of oil are also shipped.

Since the incident in November, the number of commercial vessels facing Houthi aggression has only increased, and cases are being reported on a near daily basis. The United States has been at the forefront of deploying military capacity towards the Red Sea to counter the threats in the form of drones, missiles that now include longer-range ones, and direct operations by the group's military cadre. The U.S. has now called upon partners to deploy a multinational task force around the narrow Bab al-Mandad Strait between Yemen, Djibouti (which hosts the military bases of the U.S., China, Japan, Italy, and France), and Eritrea. The Houthis have showcased an eclectic mix of military capability, including torpedoes and missiles with up to 1,000 km range capability. As of 2022, the Houthis are known to have acquired eight different types of missiles into their arsenal compared to just three previously, which had less than 50 km range and were acquired in the 1990s.

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To further highlight the region's infamous geopolitical complexities, Riyadh has in fact called for "restraint" by Washington DC in taking any military action directly against the Houthis. With the Saudis having launched a war against the Houthis in Yemen in 2015, one that technically is still under way, the kingdom is now holding talks with the group's leadership on the back of the Saudi-Iran détente brokered by China earlier this year. According to recent data published by Arab Barometer, a quantitative research institute on the Middle East (West Asia), Beijing's balanced stance on the ongoing Gaza crisis has found a positive response among Arabs on the back of the near-complete support given to the Israeli military campaign by the U.S. President, Joe Biden.

Impact on Asian economies

Beyond the regional crisis points, depletion of security in the Red Sea will have a global impact, specifically for Asian economies such as India, Japan, South Korea, and China, drawing in their interests as well. In the Persian Gulf for example, India has operationalised military capacities under Operation Sankalp since 2019, where the Indian Navy began escorting India-flagged ships, specifically oil tankers. Japan has worked its diplomatic channels directly with Tehran while South Korea has also experienced tensions with Iran over its ships travelling through the region.

> The Israel-Hamas war has opened a new front in the Red Sea, which will impact Asian economies

A U.S. call for partners to mobilise is not irrational. Previously, the global community did rally to address the issue of piracy off coastal eastern Africa, specifically around the waters of Somalia. In 2012, India joined China, Japan, and South Korea for coordinated joint patrols in the Gulf of Aden. All states took point by rotation in leading these patrols. This was of course at a time when global geopolitics looked very different. While Beijing's position in such multilateral engagements is near improbable today, New Delhi, Tokyo and Seoul continue to have common security concerns as net importers of oil and gas from the region, which automatically places them as stakeholders in West Asian security both strategically and kinetically.

Role of non-state actors

Through the current churn in the global geopolitical order, there is one major trend that states must factor into their calculus: that non-state militant actors are strengthening in agency, both politically and militarily, and often as part of state-promoted designs to secure short-term gains for long-term strategic victories. These are the fundamentals at play in an area such as the Red Sea which, in capitals such as New Delhi, do not enjoy the luxury of space in security debates. However, in an increasingly interconnected world colliding with an increasingly challenged stability of the western-led international security order, a more progressive, nimble, and practical development and deployment of power will have to be accepted to address challenges beyond the comforts of self-defined areas of interests.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Save wetlands

The government ought to give priority to a law to protect all identified wetlands. Urban land use, which includes railway projects, has increased considerably, engulfing agricultural land, forests, and grasslands. As many wetlands have been lost or impaired by draining, dredging, filling, excavating, and building, the protection of wetlands by discouraging urban development activities is needed (Page 1, "Parandur airport site gets MoD clearance", December 17). We consider everything as pervaded by a subtle divine presence, be it water bodies, fauna, flora or even planets. But scant attention is paid to protect them. As many sufferings have resulted from the conversion of water bodies, the Parandur project needs reconsideration

A.J. Rangarajan,
Chennai

Oil spill containment

The methods being used to collect or disperse oil that has contaminated a large part of north Chennai and the sea appear to be time consuming.
An effective and economically feasible way is to use human hair mats. Human hair can be purchased from Tirupati and filled into meshed sacks. A kilogram of hair can absorb up to eight litres of oil. More time should not be lost in putting such a method into practice.

Geethanjali J.,
Chennai

In Navi Mumbai

It was a commendable performance by the Indian women's team against England in the one-off Test in Navi Mumbai ('Sport' page, "Deepti's heroics propel India to memorable win over England", December 17).
Deepti Sharma deserves huge praise for her commanding performance.

S. Sankaranarayanan,
Chennai

₹10 notes and coins

Large quantities of ₹10 notes that are in circulation in Tiruchi, are in bad shape — heavily soiled and torn. Due to this, citizens and shopkeepers in the city are in a perpetual dilemma over which note to accept or decline. Added to this problem is the widespread 'unofficial ban' on ₹10 coins. The bank authorities need to be aware of this.

A. Venkatasubramanian,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

To read more letters online, scan the QR code. Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

One person, one vote, one value

Venkatanarayanan Sethuraman

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Political equality in liberal democracies is not only about equality of opportunity to participate in the political decision-making process, but also about carrying a vote value that is equal to that of other members of the community. According to the legal scholar Pamela S. Karlan, the right to vote can be diluted quantitatively and qualitatively by redrawing the boundaries of the constituency in an electoral system. Quantitative dilution happens when votes receive unequal weight due to huge deviations in the population among the constituencies. Qualitative dilution happens when a voter's chance of electing a representative of their choice is reduced due to gerrymandering (redrawing of boundaries to favour a candidate/party). Thus, delimitation of constituencies plays a major role in strengthening or weakening democracy.

Safeguards

To avoid these dilutions, our Constitution framers envisaged appropriate safeguards to ensure equal political rights for all citizens. Articles 81 and 170 of Constitution state that the ratio of the population for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly constituencies shall be the same as far as practicable. Article 327 empowers Parliament to make laws related to the delimitation of constituencies, which cannot be questioned in a court of law. Based on this, the government forms an independent delimitation commission headed by a retired Supreme Court judge to avoid qualitative dilution. Articles 330 and 332 guarantee reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies, which need to be kept in mind during delimitation. Delimitation of constituencies needs to be carried out regularly based on the decennial Census to maintain equality of the vote value as far as practicable.

The government has constituted four delimitation commissions so far: in 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002. The first delimitation order in 1956 identified 86 constituencies as two-member constituencies, which was abolished by the Two Member Constituencies (Abolition) Act, 1961. The second delimitation order in 1967 increased the number of Lok Sabha seats from 494 to 522 and State Assembly seats from 3,102 to 3,563. The third delimitation order of 1976 increased the number of Lok Sabha and State Assembly constituencies to 543 and 3,997, respectively. Due to the fear of more imbalance of representation, the 42nd Amendment Act in 1976 froze the population figure of the 1971 Census for delimitation until after the 2001 Census. The Delimitation Act of 2002 did not give power to the Delimitation Commission to increase the number of seats, but said that the boundaries within the existing constituencies should be readjusted. The Commission allowed up to 10% variation in the parity principle; yet around 17 parliamentary constituencies and many more Assembly constituencies violated this so that each representative could represent more people. But the fourth Delimitation Commission was able to reassign reserved constituencies, which increased the number of seats for SCs from 79 to 84 and STs from 41 to 47 based on the increase in population. The moratorium was extended until the first Census after 2026 for any further increase in the number of seats.

Dilution of vote value

The population of Rajasthan, Haryana, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Gujarat has increased by more than 125% between 1971 and 2011, whereas the population of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, and Odisha has increased by less than 100% due to stricter population control measures. This also reveals a huge variation in the value of vote for a people between States. For example, in U.P., an MP on average represents around 2.53 million people, whereas in Tamil Nadu, an MP represents on average around 1.84 million people, a quantitative dilution.

The qualitative dilution of vote value parity can be used as a tool to sideline or make insignificant the votes of minorities. This can happen in three ways. The first is cracking, where areas dominated by minorities are divided into different constituencies. The second is stacking, where the minority population is submerged within constituencies where others are the majority. And the third is packing, where minorities are packed within a few constituencies; their strength is weakened everywhere else.

The qualitative dilution of vote value was highlighted in the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution and the Sachar Committee Report: in a majority of the seats reserved for SCs by the Delimitation Commission (1972-76), the population of Muslims was more than 50% and also higher than the SC population. And constituencies which had a large SC population and a lower Muslim population were declared unreserved. This has a major impact on the number of Muslim representatives in Parliament. At present, the share of Muslims MPs in Parliament is only around 4.42%, whereas the Muslim population is 14.2%.

Delimitation cannot be postponed further as it will lead to more deviation in the population-representation ratio. At the same time, the interests of the southern States have to be protected as their representation in Parliament might weaken due to more seats being assigned to States with a higher population growth. Along with addressing quantitative dilution of vote value, the next Delimitation Commission needs to address qualitative dilution so that minorities are represented more adequately.

Along with addressing quantitative dilution of vote value, the next Delimitation Commission needs to address qualitative dilution so that minorities are represented more adequately

An oil spill in an ignored wetland

Northern Chennai is subjected to deeply unfair environmental standards

STATE OF PLAY

Geetha Srimathi
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On December 3-4, Cyclone Michaung, which lingered 100 km off the coast of Chennai for about 16 hours, brought heavy rainfall to the city. It forced the Tamil Nadu government to not only deal with the problem of heavy flooding, but also turn its attention to the wetlands of the heavily industrialised Ennore-Manali region in the northern part of the city where oil had spilled over from the premises of a public sector refinery.

Even as oil from the Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL) refinery flooded houses and entered the Buckingham Canal and the Kosasthalaiyar river, which empties into the Bay of Bengal, at Ennore, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board underplayed the extent of the ecological disaster. Since the spill occurred in inland waters, the Indian Coast Guard could confirm that the oil had entered the sea only through an aerial assessment.

The State government began to act only eight days after the spillage and after it was nudged by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). The government's 20-member oil spill crisis management committee, headed by the Chief Secretary, inspected the mouth of the river, or Ennore Creek, and directed the CPCL to compensate for the damages caused to the environment and the fisher folk, and ramp up remediation.

The initial work was not only delayed but also haphazard. Without an approved standard operating procedure in place and for reasons that are unclear, the Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority and district authorities, who, as per the draft 'Tamil Nadu State Oil Disaster Contingency Plan', are the nodal agency and the on-scene commander, respectively, took a back seat.

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forests set up a coordination centre at Ennore. Along with the CPCL, the Department deployed one oil skimmer and 200 fishermen with their boats from the hamlets of Ennore to remove the oil. As of December 16, 300 additional workers from four sea-cleaning agencies were brought in along with a fleet of machinery comprising five gully suckers, four skimmers, poclains and tippers. Over 50 tonnes of oil-laden sludge have been removed from Kosasthalaiyar so far.

The Department has said that remediation is expected to be completed by December 19. However, it would be unwise to rush the clean up as, in addition to the 11-kilometre stretch from the CPCL plant to Ennore Creek, oil has spread further south till the Kasimedu harbour and up north to the Pulicat backwaters, a fishing ground and also a biodiversity hotspot for thousands of migratory birds.

State government officials and the CPCL said that the incident was "unprecedented" and that they were "caught unawares". However, in 2017, two cargo ships carrying oil collided near Kamaraj Port in Ennore, significantly affecting the fisherfolk and their livelihoods. Besides, there are 17 highly polluting industries in Manali of which nine are petrochemical, and the residents of the region have been flagging pollution concerns for years.

The Ennore backwaters, where the British once held the Madras Boat Club's annual regatta, is now an ignored wetland. Fly ash from the leaky pipelines of the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO), and hot water, used as coolant, from the State-owned thermal power plants have together affected the biodiversity of the region.

In 2017, the NGT ordered TANGEDCO to fix the pipes and remove fly ash from the Ennore Creek. Six years on, no substantial work has been done in this regard. The wetland is still choked with ash, a fine particulate by-product of coal combustion that is known to be carcinogenic.

In 2022, the NGT directed the State to notify under the Tamil Nadu Wetland Mission the full extent of the portion of the Ennore wetlands that have not been encroached on, to protect them from further abuse. It also directed the Environment Department to study the wetlands as per the 1996 Coastal Zone Management Plan and develop a plan to restore the fragile creek ecosystem and the wetland complex of Ennore.

The reluctance of the State government to regulate industries in the Ennore-Manali region and restore the Ennore Creek despite court orders reflects how northern Chennai is subjected to deeply unfair environmental standards.

Unemployment remains a concern post-pandemic

The security breach in Parliament has put the focus on the employment situation in the country

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

Last Wednesday, two men entered the Lok Sabha and sprayed yellow gas from canisters, while two others stood outside Parliament and shouted slogans and sprayed gas from similar canisters. The intruders told the police that they were protesting against the government's inability to tackle unemployment.

A detailed news report published in *The Hindu* stated that all the four persons were either not employed or were unhappy about their employment status. D. Manoranjan, who opened a canister inside the Lok Sabha, was helping his father in the sheep-breeding and poultry business after completing a course in Computer Science Engineering. Sagar Sharma, who accompanied Manoranjan, was forced to drop out of school after higher secondary due to his family's financial difficulties and was driving an autorickshaw, according to his parents. Neelam Verma, who protested outside Parliament, used to talk regularly about unemployment and other issues plaguing the poor. Neelam, who holds an M.Phil in Sanskrit, was a government job aspirant from Haryana. Her mother said, "Neelam would often say it is better to die as she could not find a job despite having studied so much." Amol Shinde, who was with Neelam, had complained to his parents that the COVID-19 lockdown had killed his chances of getting into the Army. He has been trying to clear the police recruitment exam since then.

A look at employment-related indicators published by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) shows that they worsened in the post-pandemic period. **Table 1** shows the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), which is the share of the working age population which was either working or seeking employment. In FY23, the overall LFPR in India was 39.5%, the lowest since at least FY17, including the pandemic years. Among men, it was 66% and among women, it was 8.7% – both the lowest since at least FY17. So, an increasing share of Indians in the working age were neither employed nor willing to seek employment even after the pandemic.

"India's LPR displayed a consistent downward trend in the last seven years. Surprisingly, a bulk of this decline was witnessed before the pandemic itself, with the pandemic only exacerbating the situation," CMIE wrote in June this year.

Table 2 shows the unemployment rate (UR), which is the share of unemployed persons in the labour force. The UR was 7.6% in FY23, higher than pre-pandemic levels.

The data show that fewer people of working age were looking for jobs, of which a relatively high share of people were unemployed.

This trend continued even if the latest available quarter-wise data was considered. **Table 3** shows the LFPR and UR for all the quarters ending September between 2016 and 2023. The overall LPFR was about 7 percentage points lower in 2023 than it was in 2016. Moreover, the overall LFPR was slightly lower than the quarters ending September 2020 and September 2021 (7.3% each) – the pandemic-affected periods. More importantly, the UR in the quarter ending September 2023 was 8.1%, much higher than what it was in the quarters ending September 2020 and September 2021 (7.3% each).

This trend continued even if the latest available month-wise data was considered. **Table 4** shows the LFPR and UR for all the November months between 2019 and 2023. The UR was as high as 9.2% in November 2023, over one point higher than any November since 2019, including the pandemic months. These figures show that India is in the grip of a persistent unemployment problem.

The never-ending job hunt

The tables are based on data collated from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy

Awaiting opportunities: People wait in line in front of the Puducherry Employment Exchange to register and update their profiles. KUMAR S.S.

Table 1: The table shows the year-wise labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India

	All			Urban			Rural		
Year	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
2016-17	46.2	74.3	14.9	44.7	72.6	14.6	47	75.1	15.1
2017-18	43.7	72.4	11.8	42	70.5	11.1	44.6	73.4	12.2
2018-19	42.9	71.7	10.9	41.2	69.5	10.3	43.7	72.8	11.3
2019-20	42.7	71.2	10.8	40.6	68.5	9.4	43.8	72.5	11.6
2020-21	40.0	67.2	9.2	37.4	64.2	7.3	41.4	68.7	10.2
2021-22	40.1	67.0	9.2	37.6	64.4	7	41.4	68.3	10.4
2022-23	39.5	66	8.7	37.5	64.1	6.9	40.5	66.9	9.7

Table 2: The table shows the year-wise unemployment rate (UR), which is the share of unemployed persons in the labour force

	All			Urban			Rural		
Year	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
2016-17	7.4	5.1	20.4	8.9	5.7	26.2	6.7	4.8	17.5
2017-18	4.7	3.7	11.2	5.2	3.9	13.8	4.5	3.7	10
2018-19	6.3	5.1	14.6	6.9	5.3	18.7	6	5	12.7
2019-20	7.5	6.1	17.1	8.6	6.6	24.3	6.9	5.9	14.1
2020-21	8.8	8	15.4	9.6	8.4	21.3	8.4	7.8	13.2
2021-22	7.7	6.9	13.6	8.3	7.1	20.5	7.4	6.9	11.2
2022-23	7.6	6.6	15.5	8.3	7	21.3	7.2	6.5	13.3

T= Total, M= Male, F=Female

Table 3: The table shows the LFPR and UR for all the quarters ending September between 2016 and 2023

	LFPR			UR		
Quarter ended	T	U	R	T	U	R
Sept. 2016	47	45.3	47.9	8.9	10.8	8
Sept. 2017	43.3	41.4	44.3	4.1	4.9	3.7
Sept. 2018	42.8	40.9	43.8	6.1	6.7	5.8
Sept. 2019	42.8	40.7	43.9	7.6	9.1	6.8
Sept. 2020	40.7	38.0	42.0	7.3	9.1	6.5
Sept. 2021	40.5	37.7	41.9	7.3	8.9	6.6
Sept. 2022	39.1	36.8	40.2	7.1	8.4	6.5
Sept. 2023	40.2	38.7	41	8.1	9.2	7.5

Table 4: The table shows the LFPR and UR for all the November months between 2019 and 2023

	LFPR			UR		
Month	T	U	R	T	U	R
Nov. 2019	42.3	40.3	43.3	7.2	8.9	6.5
Nov. 2020	40.1	37.1	41.6	6.5	7.1	6.2
Nov. 2021	40.2	37.5	41.6	7	8.2	6.4
Nov. 2022	39.6	37.8	40.6	8	8.9	7.6
Nov. 2023	41.1	38.9	42.3	9.2	9.4	9.1

T= Total, U= Urban, R=Rural

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 18, 1973

Anti-Nixon demonstration at 'Boston Tea Party'

Washington, Dec. 17: The "Boston tea party," which triggered off the American Revolution 200 years ago and subsequently led to the country's independence from England was re-enacted yesterday at Boston Harbour and India was the only foreign country which was invited to participate in the bicentennial because of "our common colonial past (The East India Company held both countries in virtual thraldom then) and revolutionary heritage." Yesterday's celebration was to commemorate the dumping of tea from three ships by an angry mob of freedom fighters, 200 years ago, who objected to the British Parliament of the day levying a tax on tea principally for the benefit of the East India Company. The tea-dumping ceremony was re-enacted in all its detail before a large audience (though the chests were not filled with tea for fear it would further pollute the harbour waters), but it took an unexpected turn when hundreds of radical demonstrators took virtual control of the celebration and converted it into an anti-Nixon and anti-oil company demonstration. While the "official protestors" were dumping tea chests over the side of the ship reconstructed for yesterday's commemmoration, and shouting "Down with King George", hundreds of others dumped oil barrels into the harbour waters and shouted "Down with King Richard." Demanding that the country be returned to its original "revolutionary roots," these demonstrators, concerned with more modern-day malaise, also denounced the dictatorships in Chile and Greece and the American oil companies, which, they felt, were solely responsible for the present energy crisis.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 18, 1923

Adyar National University

The National University, Adyar, celebrated the third annual Convocation on Saturday evening at the Headquarters Hall, Theosophical Society, Adyar. Dr. Besant presided and granted the diplomas and degrees to the candidates. There was a large gathering of Theosophists, Indians and Europeans, and outsiders such as Dewan Bahadur L.A. Govindaraghava Iyengar, Principal, Arthur Davies, H.C. Balasundaram, Mr. Hindly and Mr. C.S. Govindarajan Mudaliar

From Page One

'Govt. should examine Governor's actions'

He recalled that the Governor had braned them as criminals and "goondas", in a manner unbecoming of a person who has been in public life for long in various capacities.

"Has anyone occupying such a position ever personally confronted protesters waving black flags at them? In a democratic system, there is a basic right to protest. Even when there were protests against us, none of us intervened personally. The police will intervene in such situations," he said.

'Whole country is paying attention'

Referring to former Supreme Court judge Rohinton Nariman's comments on Mr. Khan two days ago, Mr. Vijayan said that the whole country was now paying attention to the Governor's acts. Justice Nariman had criticised the Governor for sitting on the Bills passed by the legislature, and later referring these to the President after the Supreme Court rapped him on the knuckles.

'Global coal demand likely to decline by 2026'

"Further to that, nuclear generation is set to see moderate increases, especially in China, India, and the European Union. Against this background, coal-fired generation is likely to be pushed into a downward trajectory from 2024," the report says.

Currently, a little over half the world's coal demand comes from China. With a major expansion of renewable energy expected, coal demand in the country is expected to fall in 2024 and plateau in 2026. Overall, this will result in a 2.3% fall in global coal demand by 2026.

Global demand to remain well

Coal, the most important energy source for electricity generation, steel-making, and cement production, is also the largest source of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from human activity. Despite forecasts of a fall, global consumption is expected to remain well over 8 billion tonnes through 2026, the market report says.

"We have seen declines in global coal demand a few times, but they were brief and caused by extraordinary events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union or the COVID-19 crisis, Keisuke Sadamori, IEA Director of Energy Markets and Security, said in a statement.

"This time appears different, as the decline is more structural, driven by the formidable and sustained expansion of clean energy technologies," he added

Turning point

"A turning point for coal is clearly on the horizon – though the pace at which renewables expand in key Asian economies will dictate what happens next, and much greater efforts are needed to meet international climate targets."

Reducing use of 'unabated' coal, or coal-burning without technologies to capture carbon, is among the explicit agreements of countries signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the world's biggest influencer of climate policy.

To have a chance at keeping temperatures from rising beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century, coal emissions must decline nearly 95% between 2020 and 2050.

China, India, and Indonesia – the three largest coal producers globally – are expected to break output records in 2023, pushing global production to a new high in 2023. These three countries now account for more than 70% of the world's coal production.

Bhutan to have massive green city along Assam border

Suhasini Haidar
THIMPHU

Bhutan plans to build a massive "international city" in an area of over 1,000 sq. km on its border with Assam, Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck announced to applause from a packed audience of 30,000 at the Changlimathang stadium in Thimpu on Sunday, pitching the project as an "economic corridor connecting South Asia with Southeast Asia via India's northeastern States".

"Around two billion people live in South Asia," King Jigme Wangchuck said, thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Government of India for agreeing to build the first India-Bhutan railway line to Gelephu, which will also connect with roadways and border-trading and crossing points into Assam and West Bengal, and over time, he said, give Bhutan access to Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Singapore.

"It is a period of awakening and economic transformation in South Asia, a period of growth and immense opportunities," Bhutan's fifth king said. "There is a road and a gateway that leads to new opportunities, to markets, capital, new ideas and technology... towards our future, towards our destiny." The crowd roared in approval.

The King's announcement is the first official confirmation of what is known as the 'Gelephu Smartcity Project'. It is expected to follow environmental standards and sustainability as a goal, and will aim to attract "quality investment" from "specially screened" international companies, the 42-year-old sovereign said.

'A mindfulness city'

Apart from an international airport, which will be Bhutan's second, and geared to land larger planes than at its present airport at Paro, the plans for Gelephu are expected to include "zero emission" industries, a "mindfulness city" that plays to Bhutan's strength in tourism and wellness, as well as infrastructure companies.

Rather than a special economic zone, the Bhutanese King said that the Gelephu project in Sarpang district to Bhutan's south would be a "Special Administrative Region" that would be run under different laws to facilitate more international investment.

Major plans: Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck during National Day in Thimphu. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"This is an inflection point, a moment in history that is very important for us," the Bhutanese King continued, switching from the local Dzongkha language to English for added emphasis on terms he hopes to popularise about the Gelephu project, including "skilling projects", "digital infrastructure", and "economic hub". "What we lack in numbers, we have to make up with the quality of our people in skills," he added.

In two separate visits to India just this year, he met and discussed the project with Mr. Modi and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. King Jigme Wangchuck also engaged Indian industrialists, including Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani, and owners and top executives of the Tata, Birla, and Mahindra groups, amongst other infrastructure, real estate, and hospital developers. "During my recent visit to India, the Government of India expressed their full commitment to improve and expand the major roads leading to Bhutan. They also pledged to connect two or three of our border towns with railway lines. I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Government of India for their continued goodwill and support."

The King's decision to announce details of the Gelephu project created a sense of anticipation amongst ordinary Bhutanese citizens as well, and the local *Kuensel* newspaper billed the "green city" plan as a "new dawn for Drukyul", the Dzongkha name ('land of the thunder dragon') for Bhutan, and said that Bhutan could aspire to the success of countries such as "Singapore, South Korea, and the UAE", which had transformed from "Third World to First World" status within a generation.

Hoping for the better

The Bhutanese King's speech came just four days after the United Nations announced Bhutan was no longer a Least Developed Country (LDC), and was leaving the LDCs, even though economic troubles have been mounting. The COVID-19 pandemic, indebtedness on hydropower projects, and drastic cuts in tourism revenues have caused an economic downturn and unemployment figures reaching 20%, which have spurred a large number of Bhutanese youth and professionals to migrate to other countries in search of opportunities.

Chokey Dorji, 20, was among the hundreds that queued up overnight to enter the stadium. He told *The Hindu* that he wanted to hear about the Gelephu project as he hopes it would create more jobs for his generation.

Ahead of King Wangchuck's speech of over 45 minutes, the palace made special preparations to promote the announcement without revealing too many details, and invited guests from India and several other countries.

From India, Madhya Pradesh hotelier and cultural activist Priyadarshini Raje Scindia; designers Manav Gangwani and Nandita Mahtani; the head of Medanta Hospital, Naresh Trahan; and author Deepak Chopra, were among the special guests present at the ceremony here, which *The Hindu* was invited to cover.

In the evening, the King attended a rock concert at the stadium that saw artists from Bhutan and other countries.

Over the past two years, the King has been travelling to all 20 districts of Bhutan, trying to speak about the Gelephu project. Officials said he also travelled to several international destinations to seek partners, planners, and architects for the project, and prospective investors.

Adhir Ranjan urges Birla to revoke MPs' suspension

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Sunday wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and urged him to revoke the suspension of 13 Opposition Members of Parliament, while reiterating their demand for a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah on the December 13 security breach.

In his three-page letter, Mr. Chowdhury argued that the security breach had threatened the personal safety of the members, and they got into a "heated situation" while expressing their concerns.

"Considering the factors that led to the suspension of 13 members in the recent days, I would urge that the matter be relooked into holistically and appropriate action taken for revoking the suspension and restoring order in the House," Mr. Chowdhury said in his letter.

Parliament security breach is a serious issue, says PM

Probe agencies are investigating the security scare and taking stringent measures, Modi says noting that it is equally necessary to go to the root of the people behind it and their motives

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the seriousness of the security breach in Parliament cannot be underestimated, and called on all parties to avoid squabbling over the issue amid Opposition's protests over it in Parliament.

In an interview to the Hindi daily *Dainik Jagran*, Mr. Modi said probe agencies were investigating the breach and taking stringent measures, noting that it was equally necessary to go to the root of people behind it and their motives.

The newspaper said he described the breach as "painful and a matter of concern". "Efforts should also be made to look for a solution with collective spirit. Everyone should avoid squabbling over such an issue," Mr. Modi said. "The gravity of the incident which happened in Parliament should not be underestimated," he said, adding that the Speaker has also been taking necessary steps with all seriousness.

> Efforts should also be made to look for a solution with collective spirit. Everyone should avoid squabbling over such an issue
>
> **NARENDRA MODI**
> Prime Minister

Two persons jumped from the visitors' gallery to the Lok Sabha chamber on December 13. Opposition parties have been demanding a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah. Some members have also sought Mr. Shah's resignation.

The government has insisted that the security in Parliament complex is the responsibility of the Lok Sabha Secretariat and it has been following the Speaker's directives. It has also cited numerous such violations in the past, accusing the Opposition of politicising the issue.

New faces in BJP

To a question about the BJP picking relatively new and little-known leaders as Chief Ministers in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan, Mr. Modi said the leaders had lots of experience and hard work behind them. Taking a jibe at those questioning the BJP's choices, he said it had been the country's misfortune that a big section of people who influenced society were bound to a trite and narrow mindset.

"This is not confined to the political field. This nature troubles us in every field. If in any field, some name becomes big with some branding, then others do not get attention irrespective of their talent and hard work. Similarly in politics," he said.

The media's focus for some decades has unfortunately been the most on a few and due to this, talent and usefulness of new people are not being discussed, he added. "That is why you often see some people as new. But the truth is that they are not new. They have done the hard work and have their own experience."

Logjam on, but Winter Session enters its final week

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

As Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla maintained that the suspension of 13 MPs from the Lok Sabha had nothing to do with the security breach, but was for showing placards in the House, the Opposition parties have decided to review their floor strategies on Monday, amid the continuing stand-off in Parliament.

The Winter Session will conclude on Friday.

An Opposition member told *The Hindu* that a decision on moving an adjournment motion will be taken after a meeting of the INDIA bloc's floor leaders at 10 a.m. on Monday.

He said the meeting will also take a call on protests by the suspended MPs on the House premises. The Opposition has been submitting notices for adjournment motions in both the Houses to discuss the breach by suspending all other businesses.

Exporters to get govt. help in tackling U.S. duty cases

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Commerce Ministry has started an exercise to help Indian exporters keep proper documentation to deal with U.S. countervailing duty cases on domestic products, an official said.

As part of the exercise, teams of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) are working on a road map to work on the kind of documentation that needs to be maintained by Indian exporters.

Before imposing countervailing duty, a country carries out investigations on products which it believes that its trading partner is subsidising for export purposes. Subsidising exports is a kind of unfair trade practice.

'Parliament breach accused tried to destroy evidence'

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

Police investigating the Parliament 'security breach' have found pieces of broken and charred cell phones in Nagaur, Rajasthan, a senior officer has said. Delhi Police made a sixth arrest – Mahesh Kumawat – in this connection on Saturday. The police are also investigating the involvement of a person from West Bengal to whom, chief accused Lalit Jha had sent a video of the December 13 incident.

Cell phones destroyed

According to a senior officer, Mr. Jha and his associates burnt and damaged the cellphones of all the accused to destroy any evidence that could shed light on their "plot".

The broken cellphones were recovered after the police took Mr. Jha to Nagaur on Saturday, the officer added.

The police have invoked sections of the Indian Penal Code related to destruction of evidence and conspiracy against Mr. Kumawat. Apart from section 16 and 18 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and criminal conspiracy of the IPC, the police have also booked Mr. Jha under section 201 of IPC (destruction of evidence), said an officer.

The police are now investigating the role of another resident of West Bengal to whom Mr. Jha had allegedly sent videos of the Parliament security breach. Mr. Jha recorded the entire incident from outside the gate and shared it with multiple people, the police said.

Three militants planning attacks on policemen arrested in Srinagar: police

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Three local men, who were allegedly marking off-duty policemen of the Jammu and Kashmir Police for targeted attacks, were arrested in Srinagar. The militant module was also behind the attack on a policeman in Srinagar on December 9, the police said.

"During the course of investigations, it came to the fore that the arrested trio had prepared a long list of policemen to be targeted. The trio worked at the behest of Pakistan-based handler Hamza Burhan, a resident of Pulwama," Jammu and Kashmir Director-General of Police R.R. Swain said. Burhan, at present, operates from across the border for the Resistance Front, an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Security personnel with three men arrested for allegedly carrying out an attack on a policeman in Bemina area of Srinagar. PTI

Plot of attack

The police identified the arrested trio as Imtiyaz Ahmed Khanday, Mehnan Khan, and Danish Ahmed Malla. "Malla was the mastermind and hatched a conspiracy to attack a police constable, Muhammad Hafiz Chak, on December 9. Khanday fired at the constable in Bemina. The policeman was going home when six bullets were fired at him. Two pierced through and one hit his spine," Mr. Swain said.

The police have also recovered the weapon of offence, a Turkey-made Canik TP09.

CRPF SI killed in gun battle with Maoists

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Sub-Inspector (SI) was killed and a constable injured in a gun battle with Maoists in Chhattisgarh's Sukma, the police said. Sukma is about 430 km from the State capital of Raipur.

This is the third incident of Maoist violence reported in less than a week, even as the newly sworn-in BJP government has said that there was little room left for talks with left-wing extremists, who are active in the Bastar region.

According to the police, the gunbattle took place at 7 a.m., after a team left the Bedre police camp for an anti-Naxal operation. On the way to Ursangal, Maoists allegedly opened fire. In the attack, SI Sudhakar Reddy was killed and constable Ramu suffered a bullet injury.

APPEAL

Master Aqdas Tahir, Son of Mohammad Tahir Noor 16 years admitted in Christian Medical College, Ranipet is suffering from Thalassemia Major. This is a type of life-threatening blood disorder. The best option for him would be to undergo Allogeneic Peripheral Blood Stem Cell Transplant (PBSCT). The estimated cost of PBSCT at this hospital is approximately **Rs.15,00,000/-**.

Please send donation however small and save the boy. Cheque/D.D/M.O favouring **Save Poor Lives** A/c Aqdas Tahir. **Our Account Details:** S/B Account No.20000913487, State Bank of India, R.A.Puram, and IFSC Code: SBIN0001855. You can donate through Google pay No.9884607377, UPI Id: savepoorlives@oksbi. All donations are exempted under 80G of I.T. ACT.

SAVE POOR LIVES REGISTERED PUBLIC CHARITABLE TRUST, Flat No.A1, Ceebros Garden, Ground Floor, Old No.76, Kamarajar Salai, Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai-600028. Contact No. 044-42044165 & 044-35691848.
Mobile: 9884607377. Email: savepoorlives@gmail.com
Our website: www.savepoorlives.com

Mamata to meet PM over funds due to West Bengal

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday left for a three-day trip to New Delhi where she is likely to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday. The Trinamool Congress chairperson also said that she would attend the meeting of the INDIA bloc on Tuesday.

Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee has also accompanied the Chief Minister.

"They [Centre] have stopped our funds and are not willing to release our dues. Bengal is the only State whose funds have been withheld. Funds have been stopped for our Banglar Bari scheme. We have finalised a list of 11 lakh beneficiaries, but even then our funds have been withheld. They [Centre] have done the same for the Grameen Sadak Yojana," Ms. Banerjee said.

The issue of delay in release of funds to key Central schemes such as the MGNREGS has emerged as an important political issue in the State and Ms. Banerjee has claimed that the Centre owes ₹1.15 lakh crore to the State.

Kashi, T.N. have been sharing a bond since time immemorial: PM

Launching the second edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam, Modi says it strengthens idea of *Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*, he also hails the programme for establishing itself as an effective platform for dialogue between people of north and south

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said in Varanasi that Kashi and Tamil Nadu have been sharing an emotional and creative bond since time immemorial, adding that through the Kashi Tamil Sangamam the idea of "*Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*" is getting strengthened.

"Reaching Kashi from Tamil Nadu means coming from Madurai Meenakshi to Kashi Visalakshi. The emotional bond shared by the people of Kashi and Tamil Nadu is unique in many ways," Mr. Modi said at the inaugural ceremony of the second edition of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam at the Namo Ghat.

The Prime Minister started his speech by greeting the guests from Tamil Nadu with '*Vanakkam Kashi, Vanakkam Tamil Nadu*', and added that reaching Kashi from Tamil Nadu meant coming from one house of Mahadev to the other.

Mr. Modi said the Kashi Tamil Sangamam was unique in many ways and this confluence signified India's cultural foundation. Simultaneous Tamil translation of Mr. Modi's speech was done through Bhashini, an artificial intelligence-based language platform for those in the audience who understood Tamil.

The government launched Bhashini in 2022, aimed at providing easy access to the Internet and digital services in Indian languages, including voice-based access.

Flagging off: Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the inauguration of the second edition of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam at Namo Ghat in Varanasi on Sunday. PTI

Visit of saints

Highlighting how saints from southern India visited Kashi for centuries in a bid to awaken the consciousness of the masses, the Prime Minister added, "Our country is united by saints such as Adi Shankaracharya and Ramanujacharya, who awakened the national consciousness among people through their journeys. They also visited Kashi. India remained immortal as a nation for thousands of years due to this."

He hailed the Sangamam for establishing itself as an effective platform for mutual dialogue between people of north and south. "Banaras Hindu University [BHU] and the Indian Institute of Technology [IIT] Madras joined hands for the success of the Sangamam. The Vidhya Shakti project of IIT Madras, aimed at providing online support in mathematics to Varanasi students, and other initiatives taken within a year signify the emotional and constructive ties between Tamil Nadu and Kashi," said Mr. Modi.

He also released books on ancient Tamil texts translated into Braille. Pointing towards the installation of the Sengol in the new Parliament building, Mr. Modi said, "Feeling of *Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat* was visible when we entered the new building of Parliament where the holy Sengol has been installed. Diversity is rooted in our consciousness, despite that Indians are one."

He also witnessed cultural events, including the performance by Tamil singer and composer Sid Sriram. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, along with other dignitaries, were present at the event. Roughly 1,400 participants from Tamil Nadu and Puducherry attended the inauguration of Sangamam.

CWC to meet on Dec. 21, first time after poll debacle

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mallikarjun Kharge

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge has convened a meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) on December 21, a source said on Sunday.

The party's highest decision-making body will convene just days after parties belonging to the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) meet in New Delhi on December 19 to carry forward their discussion on putting up a united front against the BJP.

In the recent Assembly elections held in the Hindi heartland States of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, the INDIA bloc could not come to an agreement as the Congress was not keen on sharing seats with the Samajwadi Party in Madhya Pradesh.

The CWC is likely to focus on the party's preparedness for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections after the recent rout in the Assembly polls. The party has already announced a crowdfunding scheme, a mega rally in Nagpur on December 28 on its 138th Foundation Day. It is also making plans for a second edition of the Bharat Jodo Yatra on the east-west route.

It will also deliberate on the reasons for the losses in the Assembly elections as the party had hoped to wrest Madhya Pradesh from the BJP and retain power in Chhattisgarh.

In Rajasthan, where there is a tradition of voting out incumbent governments, the party was hoping that the welfare schemes of the Ashok Gehlot government would help break that tradition.

After the election results, the top leadership, including Mr. Kharge, former party chief Rahul Gandhi and general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal had reviewed the poor performance.

Modi inaugurates Surat Diamond Bourse in Gujarat, says it will add 1.5 lakh more jobs

Mahesh Langa
SURAT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB), the world's largest and modern centre for international diamond and jewellery business, at a time when the diamond industry is passing through its worst crisis due to the global economic slowdown and G-7 countries' tough stand on Russian diamonds.

The SDB building is the world's largest office complex with over 67 lakh square feet of floor area spread in nine 15-storey interconnected towers with offices ranging from 300 sq. ft to 7,5000 sq. ft. It is aimed at shifting the diamond trading business from Mumbai to Surat, which is the hub of diamond cutting and polishing with thousands of factories across the city.

Standing tall: The Surat Diamond Bourse that was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday. PTI

While opening the new project, Mr. Modi called the building another diamond in the city. "One more diamond has been added to Surat's magnificence. The tall buildings around the world have lost their sheen in front of such a huge diamond that is now being opened today."

"Surat diamond industry provides employment to around 8 lakh people, and with the coming up of the new diamond bourse, 1.5 lakh more jobs will be added," he said. The Prime Minister congratulated the team for the project, and called the project an "emblem of new India and its strength."

At the SDB, besides offices of trading of cut and polished diamonds and agents dealing with import of rough stones from international markets, 27 retail jewellery outlets will also be opened to complete the value chain of diamond jewellery.

However, the inauguration of the greenfield project, which was launched in 2015, came amidst severe challenges from global slowdown to geopolitical factors that have upended the diamond industry, which provides jobs to nearly one million people in the State.

"The situation is very bad for the workers or artisans in Surat. In last one year, 30 artisans have committed suicide due to financial difficulties," Bhavesh Tank, vice-president of Surat Diamond Workers' Union, said.

According to him, the diamond industry has been declining from a global economic slump.

New terminal at airport

Mr. Modi also inaugurated a new integrated terminal building at the Surat airport, which was recently granted international status. The passenger building is capable of handling 35 lakh passengers annually and 1,800 passengers during peak hours. It also has a provision for expansion to be able to handle 55 lakh passengers annually and 3,000 passengers during peak hours.

House panel pulls up Centre over delay in framing rules for Acts passed by Parliament

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The committee says no serious effort was made to complete the exercise within the time limit

The Subordinate Legislation Committee of the Rajya Sabha, headed by BJP MP Laxmikant Bajpayee, has pulled up the Centre for the delay in framing of rules/regulations for the Acts passed by Parliament.

The panel said in a report submitted recently in the Upper House that delay by the Union Ministries in the framing of rules has become a recurring problem. Framing rules, a duty of the Executive, is supposed be done within six months of passing the Act, and the government must table the rules of an Act in Parliament.

"However, the Committee noticed that despite the time limit prescribed for completion of framing of subordinate legislation and the several observations and recommendations of the Committee on the matter, various Acts are still pending since many years in various Ministries," Mr. Bajpayee said in the report.

On the National Food Security Act of 2013, the report said even after the Act came into force about 10 years ago, the rule-making process had been stuck up, especially on the part of State governments. "Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand are yet to complete the process," it said.

Similarly, on the rules of Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, the panel said four years had lapsed without any progress when so much importance was being given to ease of doing business.

"The Committee feels that the delay in framing the rules/regulations defeats the very purpose of enactment of the Acts as the Acts cannot be operated in the absence of the Rules/Regulations," the panel noted. It also cited its 1971 report that said if the rules were not framed within six months, the Secretary should inform the Minister concerned and obtain his orders.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, Rushikulya Bahuda Basin, Berhampur-760004
e-mail id : se_sicbam@yahoo.com
e - Procurement Notice No. ACE, RBB- 15 / 2023-24

1. Type of Work : Flood Protection Work.
2. Total No. of Works : 01 (One) No.
3. Amount put to Tender : Rs.835.62 Lakh
4. Period of Completion : 12 (Twelve) Calendar months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount (Rs. in lakh)	Availability & Submission of Bid On-line
Additional Chief Engineer, Rushikulya Bahuda Basin, Berhampur	ACE, RBB (BNID)-27/2023-24	835.62	From 03.01.2024, 10.00 AM to 18.01.2024, 5.00 PM

Date of opening of the Technical Bid:- 19.01.2024 at 11.30 A.M.
Further details can be seen from the Govt. Website "www.tendersodisha.gov.in".
Additional Chief Engineer, Rushikulya Bahuda Basin, Berhampur
A-1017: OIPR-32411/11/0019/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA - DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, DEO IRRIGATION PROJECT, AT/PO : KARANJIA, DIST:- MAYURBHANJ. Mail-Id- cce.dip.dowr@gmail.com
Government of Odisha - "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No.: 07/CCEDIP of 2023-24

1	Name of work	Construction of Khairibhandan Barrage Project including afflux bund at Anlabeni, Jashipur block of District Mayurbhanj
2	Estimated Cost	Rs.19852.12 Lakhs
3	Bid security/ E.M.D.	Rs.1,98,52,200/-
4	Period of Completion	30 (Thirty) Calendar Months
5	Class of Contractor	"Super" Class Contractor
6	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	26.12.2023 at 10:00 Hours
7	Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal	24.01.2024 up to 17:00 Hours
8	Date & time For Pre-Bid Conference	09.01.2024 at 11:30 Hours in the 0/o the Chief Construction Engineer, Deo Irrigation Project, Karanjia, Dist-Mayurbhanj in physical/ virtual mode through Google Meet. The interested bidder should ask for link by giving their email id to cce.dip.dowr@gmail.com (Joining time in Google Meet 11:30 Hours to 12:00 Hours)
9	Date of opening of bid	25.01.2024 at 11:00 Hours onwards.
10	Name & Address of the O.I.T.	Office of Chief Construction Engineer, Deo Irrigation Project, Karanjia, Dist: Mayurbhanj, Odisha.

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal "https://tendersodisha.gov.in". Any addendum/ corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said Website.
A-1018 : Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Deo Irrigation Project, Karanjia
OIPR-32337/11/0012/2324

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (P&C), IDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR.
Tender Call Notice No. File No. : IDCO/HO-P&C/O-3566/04/2023 /V-1/ 39486 Dated : 13.12.2023
Bid Identification No. : P&C/EST/E-162/2023-24
NOTICE INVITING TENDER THROUGH e-PROCUREMENT
Name of the Work : Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 33kV OH line with 232mm² and UG line (wherever required) for power supply to Talajaring Industrial Estate, Kalahandi.
Tender Value : Rs.6,13,13,713.00

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Period of Completion	Availability of Tender On-Line for Bidding	
			From	To
1	2	4	5	6
Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, IDCO Tower, Bhubaneswar.	Bid Identification No:- P&C/EST/ E-162/2023-24	06 (Six Calendar Months)	17.00 Hours of dt:19.12.2023	17.00 Hours on dt:16.01.2024

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal www.Tendersodisha.gov.in and Corrigendum if any will be published in newspapers and can only be seen in the e-procurement portal as well as in IDCO website.
CAD-3268 Sd/- Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, Bhubaneswar.
OIPR-14003/11/0312/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, CENTRAL (R&B) CIRCLE , BHUBANESWAR.
Mail i.d. : seccbbsr@gmail.com
INVITATION OF BIDS - E-procurement Tender Call Notice No.22 of 2023-24
No.4197 (Estg.) Bhubaneswar Dated the 14th December-2023
The Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in double cover system for construction works as detailed in the table given below:

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Approximate Estimated cost put to Tender (Rs.)	EMD/Bid Security (Rs. in lakh)	Cost of Bid Document	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion
1	Renovation of Civil Infrastructure of BJB Higher Secondary School under Chief Minister Special Assistance 40th Phase for the year 2023-24.	Rs.1,35,96,388/-	Rs.1,35,964/-	Rs.10000.00 Online	B Class / A Class	6 (Six) Calendar Months
2	Execution of Project works under the Scheme of Chief Minister Special Assistance (Mukhyamantri Swatantra Sahayata) for BJB Autonomous College for the year 2023-24.	Rs.1,26,92,395/-	Rs.1,26,924/-	Rs.10000.00 Online	B Class / A Class	6 (Six) Calendar Months
3	Construction of Urban PHC at Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar.	Rs.1,08,87,243/-	Rs.1,08,872/-	Rs.10000.00 Online	B Class / A Class	6 (Six) Calendar Months
4	Construction of Urban PHC, at Gadakana, Bhubaneswar.	Rs.1,21,53,884/-	Rs.1,21,539/-	Rs.10000.00 Online	B Class / A Class	6 (Six) Calendar Months

Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal / online: - From 5:00 P.M of 22.12.2023 to 5.00 P.M of 06.01.2024. Last Date of online submission of bid document in the portal / online:- 5.00 P.M of 06.01.2024. Date of Opening : - 11.00 A.M. of 08.01.2024. Name and address of officer inviting Bid: - Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal : https://tendersorissa.gov.in
B-1462: Sd/- Er. P.K. Mohanty, Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle, Bhubaneswar.
OIPR-34005/11/0006/2324

aavin THE PUDUKKOTTAI DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' UNION LTD., - (Reg. No.M.M.296)
Registered Office : 6257/3, Kalyanaramapuram 1st Street, Thirukokarnam (PO), Pudukkottai - 622 002.
Tel : 04322 - 220691, E-mail : aavinpdi@gmail.com, GSTIN : 33AAAAT6119Q1Z5
TENDER NOTICE
Invited two part sealed Tenders from eligible vehicle owners to engage Milk Procurement vehicles and T-board Taxi for Pudukkottai DCMPU for the period of two years. The tender forms available at www.tntenders.gov.in until 22.01.2024, 11.00 AM. The filled in forms and EMD to be paid through online mode on or before 22.01.2024 by 2.00 PM. The tenders will be opened on 22.01.2024 at 3.30 PM. The General Manager has the rights to alter, postpone, and cancel the tender partially or fully.
DIPR/ 6679 /TENDER/2023
GENERAL MANAGER, The Pudukkottai District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd., Pudukkottai

TAMIL NADU MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of Tamilnadu Undertaking)
No. 417, Pantheon Road, Chennai-600 008. Phone: 044-2819 1890, 2819 0259
Website: www.tnmsc.tn.gov.in, E-Mail : gmdrug.tnmsc@tn.gov.in, mngrpurdrug.tnmsc@tn.gov.in
Online Tenders is invited by the Tender Inviting Authority, Tamilnadu Medical Services Corporation Ltd., Chennai - 600008, from the bidders meeting the eligibility criteria indicated in the tender document for the supply of Disposable Safe Delivery Kit to TNMSC Ltd under rate contract system for two years from the date of acceptance of the tender.

Sl. No.	Description	e-Tender Reference	Tender Floating Period	e-Tender Submission Duration	Date and time of online opening of Technical Bids
1	Online Tender for the supply of Disposable Safe Delivery Kit to TNMSC Limited under rate contract system for two years from the date of acceptance	e-023/M(P)/ DELIVERY-KIT/ TNMSC/2023. Dated 22.12.2023	22.12.2023 at 4.00 PM to 05.01.2024 upto 4.00 PM	29.12.2023 at 10.00 AM to 05.01.2024 upto 4.00 PM	05.01.2024 at 4.30 PM

The tender document can be downloaded and the tender shall be submitted at https://tntenders.gov.in/. The tender document can also be downloaded at www.tnmsc.tn.gov.in for reference purpose.
DIPR / 6681 / TENDER / 2023
Tender Inviting Authority / General Manager (Drugs)

INBRIEF

LIC to play a role in achieving 'Insurance for All by 2047'

The LIC will play a significant role in achieving 'Insurance for All by 2047', and to meet that objective, is planning to launch a product specially designed for rural areas. "The focus would be on how to cover maximum rural masses who need insurance," LIC Chairman Siddhartha Mohanty has said. "I must thank the regulator. The regulator, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India, has already proposed *Bima Vistar*, a composite product. The product will consist of life, health and property insurance," he said. To sell those products, *Bima Vahak* would be engaged, he said, adding, that it will be a women-centric distribution channel model. PTI

TOEFL to be soon offered as a personalised test: ETS

The English language test TOEFL will soon be offered as a personalised test depending upon individual requirements as well as the test takers' background to make the assessment unbiased, according to the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Rohit Sharma, global senior vice-president of Higher Education and Work Skills, ETS, told PTI about the Princeton-based agency's plan for personalised assessments for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and increased usage of Artificial Intelligence in the test. TOEFL is a standardised test to measure the English language ability of non-native speakers wishing to enrol in English-speaking universities. PTI

Zee seeks extension of deadline for Sony merger

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Media major Zee Entertainment on Sunday said it has sought an extension of the December 21 deadline for its proposed merger with Culver Max Entertainment Private Limited (CMEPL), formerly known as Sony Pictures Networks India. Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) had approached Culver Max and Bangla Entertainment Pvt Ltd (BEPL) for an extension of the deadline, said regulatory updates. CMEPL is an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Group Corporation (SGC). BEPL is also an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of SGC and a part of SGC Group.

The proposed $10-billion merger has received regulatory approvals from fair trade regulator CCI, bourses NSE and BSE, shareholders and creditors of the company. The combined entity will be the largest entertainment network in India.

As per the agreements, ZEEL MD and CEO Punit Goenka have to lead the merger entity. However, according to some reports, CMEPL is insisting on making way for its Sony Pictures Network head N. P. Singh.

Indigenously built Unit-4 at Kakrapar attains criticality

The 700-MWe units of the project are the largest nuclear power reactors to be built by NPCIL; criticality was ascertained after it met the conditions set out by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board

T.S. Subramanian

The fourth unit of the Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP) in Gujarat started controlled fission chain reaction and thus became critical at 1.17 a.m. on Sunday. Kakrapar is about 80 km from Surat.

The project's units with a capacity of 700 MWe each are the largest indigenous nuclear power reactors to be built by Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL), a public sector undertaking of the Department of Atomic Energy.

Unit-3 of the KAPP started generating commercial electricity from August 30. These reactors are pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWRs), which use natural uranium as fuel and heavy water as coolant and moderator.

The NPCIL is already operating indigenous PHWRs with 220-MWe and 540-MWe capacity at other facilities. The reactor's first criticality was ascertained after it met all the conditions set out by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), India's nuclear safety watchdog.

Moving forward: The third and fourth nuclear reactors with their containment domes (extreme left) at Kakrapar in Gujarat. Their cooling towers are visible. NPCIL

B.S. Pathak, Chairman and Managing Director of NPCIL, was present in the station's control room with the site team when the KAPP-4 was commissioned, as per an NPCIL press release.

He congratulated the NPCIL employees and called the criticality of the KAPP-4, happening within six months of the commercial operation of unit-3, a significant achievement.

It demonstrated the strength of NPCIL in all facets of nuclear power generation – the design, construction, commissioning, and operation of reactors, Mr. Pathak said.

Indian industries supplied the equipment and executed the contract for these two reactors, according to the NPCIL press release.

The Kakrapar Atomic Power Station already has two operating PHWRs with a capacity of 220 MWe each, called KAPS-1 and -2.

Earlier, on December 13, Mr. Pathak told *The Hindu* that the indigenously built 700-MWe reactors are among "the best reactors of this PHWR category".

They have many advanced safety features, including among others a steel-lining from the floor to the wall and a passive decay heat removal system to cool the fuel core, he added.

The NPCIL at present operates 23 nuclear electricity reactors with a total capacity of 7,480 MWe. It has nine units, including KAPP-4, under construction while 10 more reactors, with a total capacity of 7,000 MWe, are in the pre-project phase.

'1971 War is the bedrock of Dhaka's ties with India'

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

India stands ready to walk together with Bangladesh in realising Dhaka's vision of a stable, progressive and prosperous nation, the Indian envoy has said as he underlined that the 1971 Liberation War remains the bedrock for ties between the two countries.

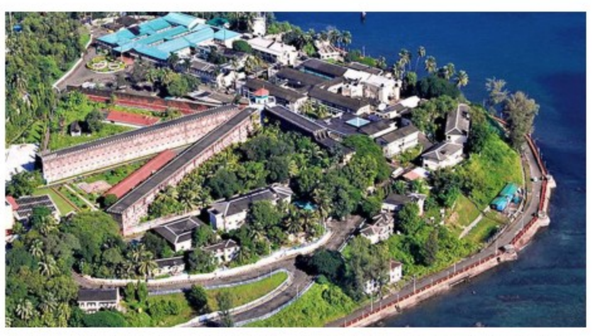
"It is time for us to cherish our friendship and reiterate the commitment to preserve and promote the spirit of 1971 that remains the bedrock of our ties," Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma was quoted as saying by Bangladesh's national news agency BSS. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Biman Bangladesh Airlines inaugural flight from Dhaka to Chennai at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport here, he said the Liberation War and the triumph of the people epitomise the two countries' shared sacrifices for Bangladesh's freedom and stand testimony to the time-tested friendship between Delhi and Dhaka. "As nations whose destinies are as connected as our geographies and historical roots, we are today at the cusp of realising the promise of a *Sonali adhyay* (golden chapter) in our ties," he said.

SCs were never counted in Andaman; now a House committee sits up and takes notice

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Nearly 20 years after the never-accounted-for Dalit population of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands was clubbed with the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category by the Union Territory administration, and a decade after the Centre did the same, a parliamentary committee has called for a special panel to evaluate the issues faced by the Scheduled Castes in particular, and ensure their representation in services on the islands.

The Parliamentary Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, headed by BJP MP Kirit Premjibhai Solanki, has noted that there is a "significant presence of Scheduled Castes in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands", also suggesting that they should be considered for welfare schemes and service matters.



The SC population, which is concentrated in and around Port Blair town, are mostly migrants from other parts of the country.

But no census has ever recorded any Scheduled Caste population on the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) Islands and neither has the Constitution (SC) Order ever listed any community as SC on the islands – something that was flagged by the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (NCSCST) as far back as in 1999 as a "vital problem".

Wrong categorisation

The commission had noted at the time that the people it was referring to as Scheduled Castes were refugees from Bangladesh, who had been resettled on the islands by the Government of India's Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Department till as late as 1980, further saying that they had migrated to the islands as refugees "in large numbers".

In a report tabled in Parliament last week, the House committee on the Welfare of SCs and STs said it had asked the Union Territory (UT) administration to form a special panel to study issues of representation and welfare schemes of the SCs of the islands in particular and report the action taken at the earliest.

Mr. Solanki told *The Hindu*, "It is correct that there has been no official count of the Scheduled Castes... There are some in small numbers in Port Blair and the committee's recommendation was to ensure that their issues are heard, they are able to access government schemes accordingly, and that they are represented adequately."

The committee's recommendation came after its study visit to the islands in August, during which the Chairperson was accompanied by 20 MPs from both Houses, across party lines. Sources said the issue of SCs was flagged by some of the MPs at a meeting with senior administration officials at Port Blair.

The SC population, which is concentrated in and around Port Blair town, are mostly migrants from other parts of the country such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

The erstwhile NCSCST, in its Fifth Report of 1998-99, had noted that it had tried to draw the attention of the Census Department and the local administration to the issue of including the SCs in the censuses several times but to no avail.

Cyberthreats: Centre sets up secure e-mail network for staff of critical departments

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

In the wake of cyberattacks, the Centre has set up a secure e-mail network for 10,000 users in critical Ministries and departments, a senior government official has said. The e-mail system that works on Zero Trust Authentication (ZTA) has been designed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

"User name and passwords are not enough; now a two-factor authentication has been activated. Other than passwords, facial recognition or biometrics is required. The log-in and log-out times are recorded and monitored," the official said.

The measures to strengthen cybersecurity come in the wake of multiple cyberattack attempts to target critical installations and government websites such as the November 23, 2022 cyberattack at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the national capital. The attack crippled the servers and e-hospital services for more than a month.

However, in February this year, Digital India Corporation (DIC), a not-for-profit company set up by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), invited bids from private players to select cloud service providers to "operate, manage and migrate existing projects as well as future projects." The DIC is currently working on various projects of national importance such as Digilocker, Poshan Tracker, MyScheme, Umang, APISetu, NCW, Kisan Sarathi, Academic Bank of Credits, etc., which run on cloud services provided by Amazon Web Services.

The scope of the bid also included migrating the e-mail services of government employees to a private player, currently handled by the NIC. Though the government did not make any announcements, the *Hindustan Times* reported on September 12 that the government has selected Chennai-based business solutions provider Zoho to handle the e-mail services.

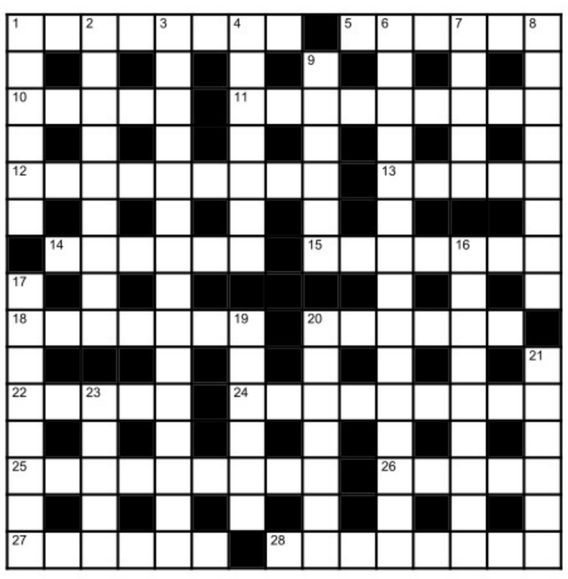
The NIC has also implemented an e-office with government offices being encouraged to go fully digital. The e-office has been adopted fully in 75 Ministries.

TH CROSSWORD + 14048

(set by Afterdark)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Auditor said you denied shortage of resources (8)
5 Leaders of people's revolution instigating strife, ordered neta to confinement (6)
10 Musical work not in open-air arrangement (5)
11 Periodical war seen with past president inflamed (9)
12 Roughly 67% of the team at one side of hill (9)
13 Clay sculpture showcased in English home at the entrance (5)
14 Ankit tensed holding baby animals (6)
15 Perhaps a silent agent with another in retreat following Southern general (7)
18 Images of police officer in coat regularly in news (7)
20 Drink is No 1, top; from the east (6)
22 Presses taxmen to stop working (5)
24 Intolerant trouble-maker at international event eliminating top two leaders (9)
25 Speculative first name deleted after English master became sensitive (9)
26 Frequent trouble... (5)
27 ...worry with sisters sadly losing independence (6)
28 Can press release help cover errors at the summit? (8)

Down

1 Top honcho starts to lambast erratic, reckless AC (6)
2 Earlier end price was fixed by government (9)
3 Access their cart to redesign features (15)
4 X is back on confrontation... (7)
6 ...regarding offer by leaderless locals and proxies (15)
7 Outstanding payments up erroneously in instalment (5)
8 Hornet stings? Run on the edges in a direction (8)
9 A side in ship swerves (6)
16 Chair is made be expert with iron and stainless steel shows zero error essentially (9)
17 Bureaucrats are away, to chill and rest often (8)
19 Son's at New York escorting relative that's lean (6)
20 Dad's *upanyas*, loved and relished from the beginning, sought after (7)
21 First uncle in government's bust (6)
23 Smell of egg's sour (5)

SUDOKU

	9		7		4		1	
	3			8		5	4	
	6							
		4	3	9		2	7	
			4		2			
	1	5		7	8	4		
							2	
	2	7		3			6	
	4		8		7		9	

No.SS6011 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

	F	E	L	L	O	W		G	A	L	L	O	P	
	L		I		R				C		U		L	
Z	I	G	Z	A	G	S		S	T	A	C	K	E	D
	E		A		A		E		O		K		N	
A	S	T	R	O	N	O	M	E	R		I	N	T	O
			D		I		B				E		I	
	C	A	S	E	S		A	I	R	C	R	A	F	T
	O				M		S		E				U	
S	U	G	G	E	S	T	S		L	O	C	A	L	
	N		E				I		A		O			
S	T	U	N		B	R	E	A	T	H	L	E	S	S
	L		E		L		S		I		L		L	
R	E	T	R	E	A	T		C	O	V	E	R	E	D
	S		A		Z				N		G		P	
	S	I	L	V	E	R		A	S	P	E	C	T	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	1	6	8	9	2	7	5	3
7	9	8	6	5	3	1	4	2
5	3	2	1	7	4	6	8	9
2	4	1	9	3	7	8	6	5
8	7	9	5	6	1	2	3	4
6	5	3	2	4	8	9	7	1
3	2	5	7	8	9	4	1	6
1	6	7	4	2	5	3	9	8
9	8	4	3	1	6	5	2	7

FAITH

Indestructible wealth

In the first verse of *Thiruppavai*, Andal describes Gokula as a prosperous place, explained T.N. Aravamudachariar in a discourse. It is Krishna's birth that has led to a surge in the prosperity of the place. The Gopikas are 'selva chirumeergaal' – wealthy girls, their bhakti being their wealth. Lakshmana is described in the Valmiki Ramayana as 'lakshmI sampanno,' the one who is endowed with wealth. Lakshmana gives up the luxuries of palace life, and follows Rama to the forest. So, what is his wealth? His wealth is his devotion to Rama. That is the best and only indestructible wealth anyone can aspire for.

Andal describes the rules followed by the Gopikas when they undertake the *vrata*. They worship the One who reclines in the milky ocean. They bathe early in the morning. They vow not to decorate their eyes with collyrium, or wear flowers in their hair. They give up ghee and milk for the duration of the *vrata*. These are things given up temporarily, while they observe the vrata. But they also have two other resolutions, which are for all time. They vow never to do what should not be done. They vow never to utter words that are likely to have unpleasant consequences.

This verse shows us the detached attitude a person aspiring for moksha must have.

QUITO

Honorary U.K. consul kidnapped in an Ecuador prone to drug violence

AFP

U.K.'s honorary consul in the Ecuadoran port city of Guayaquil has been kidnapped. The abduction of Colin Armstrong comes amid a sharp rise in drug-related violence in parts of Ecuador. He was kidnapped at dawn on a farm he owns in Baba, a small city in Los Rios. There were no immediate details about his captors. AFP

MANILA

Soldier, six rebels killed in clashes ahead of talks with Philippine govt.

AFP

Six communist guerrillas and a soldier were killed in a clash on Sunday, as the Philippine government prepared to restart peace talks to end one of the world's longest-running Maoist insurgencies. Government troops exchanged fire with New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas near Balayan, about 68 km south of the capital Manila. AFP

BELGRADE

Serbian populist party looks to extend rule in double-header vote

AFP

Serbians headed to the polls on Sunday in elections that will likely see President Aleksandar Vucic's populist party extend its rule as his right-wing Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) has a double-digit lead over the leading opposition coalition. Vucic is not personally on the ballot in Sunday's parliamentary and local elections. AFP

SEOUL

South Korean military says North Korea has fired a ballistic missile

AP

North Korea fired at least one ballistic missile on Sunday, Seoul's military said, as the U.S. and South Korea warned any nuclear attack would lead to the end of Pyongyang's regime. "North Korea fires unidentified ballistic missile towards the East Sea," Seoul said, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan. AFP

Israel claims to have found biggest Hamas tunnel in Gaza

Agence France-Presse
EREZ

The Israeli Army said on Sunday it had uncovered the biggest Hamas tunnel in the Gaza Strip so far, just a few hundred metres from a key border crossing.

Such was its size that small vehicles would be able to travel within the tunnel, an AFP photographer granted access to it reported.

The underground passage formed part of a wider branching network that stretched for over four kilometres and came within 400 metres of the Erez border crossing, the Army said in a statement.

The honeycomb of passageways features a drainage systems, electricity, ventilation, sewage and a communication network as well as rails.

The floor is compacted earth while its walls are reinforced concrete and its entrance is a metal cylinder with 1.5 centimetre thick walls.

Footage released by the Israeli Army, which it said was filmed by Hamas, showed a small construction vehicle being driven into the tunnel. The Israeli army said it had found a large number of weapons stored in the tunnel, ready to be used in an attack.

Israel faces calls for ceasefire following killing of hostages

European allies, protesters back home pressure Israel for new truce; UN aid trucks to enter Gaza from a second location; telecom services gradually resume in the enclave after a four-day blackout

Associated Press
DEIR AL-BALAH

Israel's government faced calls for a ceasefire from some of its closest European allies and from protesters at home on Sunday after a series of shootings, including of three hostages who waved a white flag, added to mounting concerns about its conduct in the 10-week-old war in Gaza.

The protesters urge the government to renew hostage negotiations with Gaza's Hamas rulers, whom it has vowed to destroy. Israel could also face pressure to scale back major combat operations when U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin visits this week, as Washington has expressed growing unease with civilian casualties even while providing vital military and diplomatic support.

The air and ground war has flattened large parts of northern Gaza, killed thousands of civilians and driven most of the population to the southern part of the besieged territory, where many are packed into crowded shelters and tent camps. Some 1.9 million Palestinians – nearly 85% of Gaza's population – have fled their homes.

Chaos unleashed: Palestinians loot a humanitarian aid truck as it crossed into the Gaza Strip in Rafah on Sunday. AP

They are surviving off a trickle of humanitarian aid. Israel said that starting Sunday, UN aid trucks would be able to enter Gaza from a second location, Kerem Shalom.

Sign of desperation

In a sign of desperation, dozens of Palestinians surrounded aid trucks after they drove in through the Rafah crossing with Egypt, forcing some to stop before climbing aboard, pulling boxes down and carrying them off. Other trucks appeared to be guarded by masked people carrying sticks.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel "will continue to fight until the end," with the goal of eliminating Hamas.

Israeli media reported that David Barnea, the head of Israel's Mossad spy agency, met over the weekend with Qatar's Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who has mediated with Hamas, to discuss renewed talks.

Gaza, meanwhile, saw telecom services gradually resume after a four-day communications blackout, the longest of several outages during the war.

In Israel on Sunday, French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna called for an "immediate truce" aimed at releasing more hostages, getting larger amounts of aid into Gaza and moving toward "the beginning of a political solution."

Collective call

France's Foreign Ministry earlier said one of its employees was killed in an Israeli strike on a home in Rafah on Wednesday. It condemned the strike, which it said had killed several civilians, and demanded clarification from Israeli authorities.

The Foreign Ministers of the U.K. and Germany, meanwhile, called for a "sustainable" ceasefire, saying "too many civilians have been killed."

"Israel will not win this war if its operations destroy the prospect of peaceful co-existence with Palestinians," British Foreign Secretary David Cameron and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock wrote in the U.K.'s Sunday Times.

At least five Palestinians were killed during an Israeli raid in a built-up refugee camp in the West Bank town of Tulkarem, on Sunday.

Over 60 feared dead as migrant vessel capsizes off the coast of Libya, says UN

Associated Press
CAIRO

A boat carrying dozens of migrants trying to reach Europe capsized off the coast of Libya, leaving more than 60 people dead, including women and children, the UN migration agency said.

The shipwreck, which took place overnight between Thursday and Friday, was the latest tragedy in this part of the Mediterranean Sea, a key but dangerous route for migrants seeking a better life in Europe. Thousands have died, according to officials.

The UN's International Organization for Migration said in a statement late on Saturday that the boat was carrying 86 migrants when strong waves swamped it off the town of Zuwara on Libya's western coast and that 61 migrants drowned, according to survivors.

"The central Mediterranean continues to be one of the world's most dangerous migration routes," the agency wrote on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

The European Union's border agency said in a statement on Sunday that its plane located the partially deflated rubber boat on Thursday evening in Libya's search and rescue zone.

The boat was carrying 86 migrants when strong waves swamped it off the town of Zuwara on Libya's western coast. FILE PHOTO

"The people were in severe danger because of adverse weather conditions, with waves reaching heights of 2.5 metres," the agency, known as Frontex, said.

Alarm Phone – a hotline for migrants in distress – said that some migrants onboard reached out to the volunteer group who in turn alerted authorities including the Libyan coast-guard, "who stated that they would not search for them."

Libya has in recent years emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and West Asia, even though the North African nation has plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime autocrat Muammar Gadhafi in 2011.

More than 2,250 people died on the central European route this year, according to Flavio Di Giacomo, an IOM spokesperson.

According to the IOM's missing migrants project, at least 940 migrants were reported dead and 1,248 missing off Libya between January 1 and November 18.

The project said about 14,900 migrants, including over 1,000 women and more than 530 children, were intercepted and returned to Libya this year.

Mourners pray by the tomb of Kuwait's late Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad at Sulaibikhat cemetery in Kuwait City on Sunday. AFP

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf laid to rest in low-key ceremony

Agence France-Presse
KUWAIT CITY

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who was Defence Minister when Iraq invaded the oil-rich country in 1990, was laid to rest Sunday in a low-key funeral, a day after he died aged 86.

Foreign leaders and envoys were later due to pay their final respects, including the Saudi de facto ruler, the kings of Bahrain and Jordan, and U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

Draped in a Kuwaiti flag, the coffin of Sheikh Nawaf, whose cause of death was not disclosed, was carried into a Kuwait mosque for prayers ahead of a burial ceremony that was broadcast on state television.

Attendance was limited to ruling family members, making for an intimate farewell for the Emir who reigned for three years.

The new Emir, Sheikh Meshal, a security expert and the half-brother of the late ruler, will receive condolences on Monday and Tuesday from the public and is expected to deliver his oath before parliament on Wednesday.

India's Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri arrived in Kuwait as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's special envoy.

Mr. Puri will also deliver personal letters of condolences from President Droupadi Murmu and Mr. Modi.

Thousands displaced as Sudan's RSF seizes aid hub

Agence France-Presse
WAD MADANI

Paramilitary forces established a base on Sunday in the formerly safe city of Wad Madani in war-torn Sudan, sending thousands fleeing, many of them already displaced.

Thousands have sought to escape the former aid hub since the war between the Army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) reached Wad Madani on Friday, according to the United Nations.

Previously, the city had been "one of Sudan's few remaining sanctuaries", according to the Norwegian Refugee Council's Sudan director William Carter.

Echoing the brutal urban warfare in the capital Khartoum, 180 kilometres north, fighter jets flew overhead as the sound of explosions echoed across the Wad Madani.

American Ambassador John Godfrey urged the RSF to "cease their advance" on Al-Jazirah state, where nearly half a million displaced people had sought refuge, and to "refrain from attacking" state capital Wad Madani.

Putin says 'problems' started with Finland after it joined NATO

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned of "problems" with neighbouring Finland after it joined NATO earlier this year, saying Moscow will create a new military district in northwest Russia in response, in an interview published on Sunday.

Finland, which shares a 1,340-kilometre border with Russia, joined NATO in April this year in the midst of Moscow's Ukraine offensive.

"They (the West) dragged Finland into NATO. Did we have any disputes with them? All disputes, including territorial ones in the mid-20th century, have long been solved," Mr. Putin told a state TV reporter.

Military district

"There were no problems there, now there will be, because we will create the Leningrad military district and concentrate a certain amount of military units there."

The comments come as Finland again shut its border with Russia this week, accusing it of orchestrating a migrant crisis on its border.

Vladimir Putin

Moscow has warned of counter-measures to Helsinki's NATO accession.

'Empty rhetoric'

Mr. Putin also said Russia had no reason to be at war with NATO countries after U.S. leader Joe Biden said this month that Moscow "won't stop" in Ukraine if it is successful there.

"It is rhetoric to justify false policy on Russia," Mr. Putin said.

He said Moscow had "no interest – either in geopolitical, economic or military terms – to fight with NATO countries."

The Kremlin's Ukraine campaign has reawakened fears of Russian aggression in the eastern flank of NATO.

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KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : e-Tender No.184/2023-24/SE/PHC/ALP e-Tender No.185/2023-24/SE/PHC/ALP KIIFB - KUTTANAD DRINKING WATER PROJECT - Package VII - and VIII - Construction of OHSR and distribution network at Ramankary, Champakulam, Nedumudy and Kainakary with online chlorine booster at Ramankary OH tank site and rehabilitation of existing OHSR - Pipeline Work, **EMD :** Rs.5,00,000/-, **Tender Fee :** Rs. Rs.19,518/-, **Last Date for Submitting Tender :** 05-01-2024, 02:00 pm, **Phone :** 0477 - 2237954.
Website: **www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**

Superintending Engineer
KWA-JB-GL-6-1837-2023-24 PH circle Alappuzha

KMF Karnataka Co-Operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited
KMF Complex, Dr. M. H. Marigowda Road, DRC Post, Bangalore-560 029.
Tel: 080-25536625 / 26096888, e-mail: engg@kmf.coop

IFT No: KMF/ENGG/PIBOs_EPR_PWM/2023-24 Date: 13-12-2023

TENDER NOTIFICATION
[TWO COVER SYSTEM] [THROUGH KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY]

Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd; Bengaluru invites tenders from the eligible CPCB Authorized Post Consumer Plastic Waste Recyclers/ Waste Collection Agencies/any other eligible companies who are in the similar business through KPPP for the works mentioned in the table below. The interested Waste Collection Agencies & any other eligible companies who have executed similar kind of works may participate in the tender as indicated below, by logging on to website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in and also contact Help desk E-mail: hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com, support@eprochelpdesk.com and helpline no. +91-8046010000, +91-8068948777, 080-22230960, 080-22234115

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Tender Quantity (MTPA)	EMD (Rs)
1	EPR Fulfillment / Plastic Waste Management by way of Collection, Segregation & Recycling of Post-Consumer Plastic Waste generated by KMF& its Member Milk Unions & Units Across PAN India. The entire activities shall be managed in confirmation to Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 along with Annual Filing for the year 2023-24 (LDPE/LLDPE/PE/MLP/Tetra Pak Paperboard Cartons/ waste Film of Milk, Curd, Ghee, Butter Milk and Lassi etc – Pouch Milk, UHT Milk & Fresh Products Packaging Waste- All category Plastic Waste)	Approx. 16000	6,00,000/-

1) Tender schedules may be downloaded from dated 18-12-2023 to 02-01-2024 up to 4-00 pm. 2) Pre Bid Meeting on date: 27-12-2023 at 12.00 pm. 3) Last date for Tender submission on date: 02-01-2024 up to 4.00 pm. 4)Tender [Part 1] to be opened on date: 04-01-2024 at 11.30 am. Any Modifications / changes in the Bid Document / Tender Specification / Tender Schedule will be uploaded in KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Only.

For Karnataka Milk Federation Limited
Sd/- Director [Engineering]-1

Linking insurance to stock markets

COVERNOTE

If you want a life insurance policy now, buy one; make investments separately; dabble in the market and take the wins and losses; but, a product that offers multiple benefits under an umbrella is dicey

K. Nitya Kalyani

The Indian capital markets are booming, Sensex reaching dizzying heights of 70,000 points and beyond. Even those who haven't thought of investing in a share in the last two years of a bull market are sitting up and wondering if they are missing something and should jump in.

Coming up is the JFM (January, February, March) quarter, the final quarter of a financial year when life insurance sales pitches go up several notes due to the tax incentive.

We spoke of intentionally (or well-intentioned) confusing product positioning in CoverNote in the last few weeks. Selling insurance as investment, as a tax-break and so on.

Unit-linked insurance

In this instalment let us see one more product from the insurance industry, the unit-linked insurance policy or ULIP, which is definitely among the more sought-after life insurance policy types as industry statistics show.

ULIPs bundle death cover with a market investment. The latter is much like a mutual fund. ULIPS are an easy sell because the returns from it are linked to the capital markets, a pie in the sky that will attract anybody.

Part of the premium you pay goes towards life insurance protection and the rest – usually a larger part – is invested in the capital markets according to your choice of funds.

You float higher with the market and all's well as far as its going well. There is life insurance for your future or for your family's protection, as well as your fund growing with the market.

There is also a tax benefit, much curtailed in the recent years by regulations in order to protect the product from being misused and the prospective policyholder from being misled.

Stock market crash

It's when the music stops that things turn bad. When there is a stock market crash, the value of the fund crashes. This is enough to depress anybody, even professional investors.

But for somebody who made this investment to protect their children and lost value due to external factors, the shock is significant. Significant enough for the anger to turn on life insurance itself.

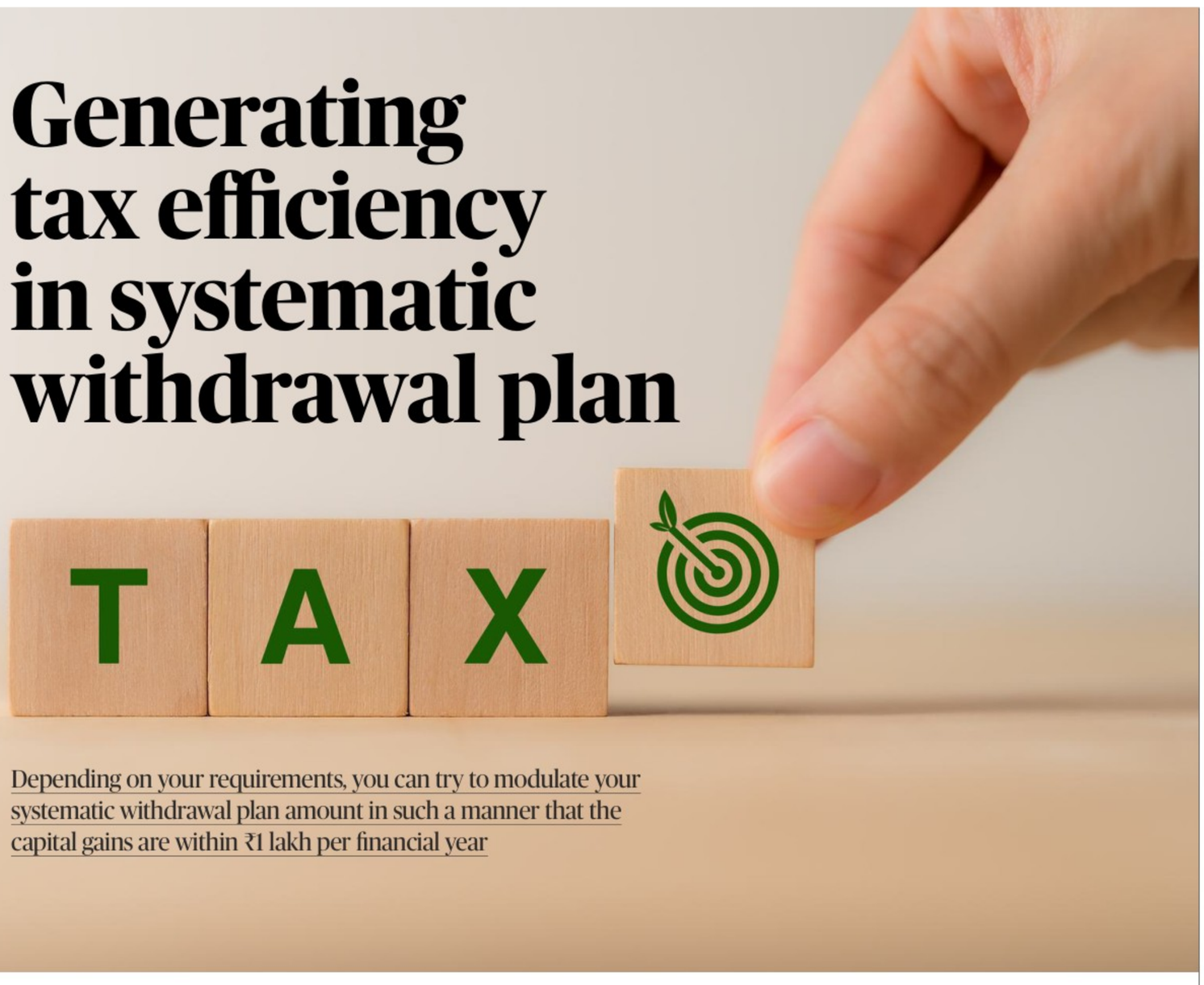
Because that is what the policyholder was buying when it comes to the core of it. So, if you want a life insurance policy now, buy one. Make your investments separately. Dabble in the market and take the wins and the losses.

But a product that offers multiple benefits under an umbrella is dicey. No investment product can be all things to all people. It's a myth that is a convenient marketing tool. If you don't know about life insurance its easy to educate yourself. But that is not the time to dabble in markets.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Generating tax efficiency in systematic withdrawal plan



Depending on your requirements, you can try to modulate your systematic withdrawal plan amount in such a manner that the capital gains are within ₹1 lakh per financial year

TAX SMART

Joydeep Sen

Systematic withdrawal plan (SWP) is a method of redeeming your investments in mutual funds (MFs). You give a standing instruction to the MF, that a given amount is to be redeemed from the fund(s) you have invested in. The date is mentioned in the standing instruction. The frequency is usually monthly, but it can be of any frequency as per your convenience. As an example, you have investments in 10 funds across Asset Management Companies (AMCs). Of these, you want to avail of 5 funds as of now for SWP and keep the other 5 intact. Depending on your investment amount and requirements, you can instruct for redemption of say ₹20,000 per month from fund A, ₹25,000 per month from fund B, ₹15,000 per month from fund C, and so on. You may define the date as say 5th day or 10th day of the month.

SWP can be used by any investor, but is popular in retirement planning. Senior citizens, who do not have active income, utilise this method for regular cash flow requirements.

There is flexibility in this approach. The quantum of SWP can be increased or decreased as per requirement. An SWP can be stopped as well, if not required. If required, it is possible to do lump-sum withdrawal from a fund or even completely exit a fund, if it is under-performing for a long period of time. To be noted, so much of flexibility is not there in some of the other investment avenues used for cash flows during retirement phase.

Taxation

In the growth option of equity funds, taxation is as per holding period. For a holding period of up to one year, it is short-term capital gains (STCG). STCG is taxable at 15% plus surcharge and cess as applicable to the investor.

For a holding period of more than one year, it is taxable as long-term capital gains (LTCG). LTCG is taxable at 10% plus surcharge and cess as applicable to the investor. However, LTCG is applicable for capital gains of more than ₹1 lakh per financial year; up to ₹1 lakh of LTCG is exempt from tax.

For one-time investment – one time redemption, capital gain for taxation is computed as exit net asset value (NAV) of the fund minus entry NAV. For a series of entries and/or exits, capital gain is computed on the basis of first in first out (FIFO). If you did a lump sum investment in the fund earlier, then the multiple exit NAVs of your SWP will be compared with the entry NAV for computing capital gains. If you had done a systematic investment plan (SIP) earlier and doing a SWP now,

> Your systematic withdrawal plan should commence one year after the initial investment in the fund, to avail of long-term capital gain

every redemption NAV will be matched with the earliest investment (first in) for capital gains.

Your SWP should commence one year after the initial investment in the fund, to avail of LTCG.

Depending on your requirements, you can try to modulate your SWP amount in such a manner that the capital gains are within ₹1 lakh per financial year. To be noted, here we are talking of ₹1 lakh of capital gains per year and not the quantum of withdrawal per year.

As an illustration, your base investment at the relevant entry NAV is ₹10 lakh. The market value, at exit NAV, is ₹10.9 lakh. In this case, ₹10 lakh is the principal component of your SWP and capital gains is ₹90,000. Provided all the instalments are after a holding period of more than one year, it is exempt from tax as the gains are within ₹1 lakh for that year. Your cash flows, assuming monthly SWP, is ₹10.9 lakh/12 = ₹90,833.

Even if the withdrawal quantum is higher, you will be taxed on LTCG of more than ₹1 lakh for that year. If you can contain the withdrawal quantum as discussed above, your SWP would be tax free.

Conclusion

The usual approach to deciding the quantum of SWP is that it should be limited to the earnings in the fund. People estimate the earnings from the fund, say 10% per year, and withdraw only so much through SWP. The logic is, otherwise, the principal component would be touched for withdrawal.

However, if you are a senior citizen, this is your kitty, this is what you have worked for, in the working phase of your life. Unless you want to leave behind a legacy fund for the next generation, it is ok to utilise your money for your requirements.

You have to estimate a life expectancy, remaining number of years, earnings of the fund and realistically estimate how much of the principal component you can withdraw per year. Your kitty should sustain for the remaining number of years. As an illustration, if you are at age 60 and your life expectancy is 80, you can withdraw a limited amount of principal per year so that that the remaining (invested) amount along with the earnings, sustain you for 20 years.

Tax efficiency, to the extent you can manage it in the manner discussed, enables you to enjoy your kitty entirely.

(The writer is a corporate trainer and author)

Emotions play role in investments

THINKINVESTOR

You should reduce the number of decisions you make on investments; that way, you do not tempt your reflexive brain to make investment decisions; open a RD and set up an equity SIP

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

In this article, we discuss how emotions affect investment decisions and how to manage your emotions.

Reflexive Vs. reflective

Research into neuroscience has shown people who have lost their emotions because of brain damage cannot meaningfully evaluate risks associated with their decisions. This means individuals with a healthy brain can use emotions to make decisions. But emotions can also lead us to take hasty decisions. There is another issue. Our brain occupies about 2% of body weight but requires almost 20% of energy to function. That is a lot. Our brain, therefore, optimises its energy usage. For most decisions, our brain switches automatically to its reflexive process. Call it taking non-conscious actions if you will. A simple way to understand this is to remember the time you learnt to drive a manual gear-shift car. You, perhaps, paid more attention initially to how to shift gear than the traffic on the road! But once you were familiar with the process, shifting gears became a non-conscious action.

Using reflexive brain conserves energy for reflective brain (conscious decision) to process important decisions such as doing professional work and planning for retirement. If your professional work requires expending lot of brain power, your reflective brain is likely to be tired by the end of the week, if not by the end of the day. Taking investment decisions when reflective brain is tired is bad for your financial health. Why? To conserve energy, your reflexive brain will take over the decision process; you could pick investments that are emotionally satisfying, not necessarily ones that will help you achieve your goal. It is hard to control this switch from reflective to reflexive brain. So, what should you do?

Conclusion

You should reduce the number of decisions you make on investments. That way, you do not tempt your reflexive brain to make investment decisions. A simple way to do this will be to open a bank recurring deposit and set up a systematic investment plan (SIP) on an equity fund to finance each life goal. With your primary investment decision out of the way, you can deploy reflective brain to manage your short-term investments (trading portfolio). If you frequently trade in the market, recognising chart patterns could also become a non-conscious decision. Managing the trade and taking profit will still require using reflective brain.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
HDFC Bank	10.50 onwards	10,747 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to Rs 4,999
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3.5%
State Bank of India	10.55-14.55	10,759-11,777	2,152-2,355	NIL (till 31st January 2024)
ICICI Bank	10.65 onwards	10,784 onwards	2,157 onwards	Up to 2.50%
Bank of Baroda	10.10 onwards	10,648 onwards	2,130 onwards	Up to 2% (Min Rs 1,000 and Max Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
Bank of India	10.25-14.75	10,685-11,829	2,137-2,366	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 5,000)
Canara Bank	10.65-15.65	10,784-12,066	2,157-2,413	Up to 1%
Punjab National Bank	10.40-16.95	10,772-12,413	2,144-2,483	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.99-16.00	10,621-12,159	2,124-2,432	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49 onwards	10,994 onwards	2,199 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	10.15-12.80	10,660-11,325	2,132-2,265	Up to 1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.75 onwards	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Up to 3.50%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.00-12.80	10,624-11,325	2,125-2,265	1% (Rs 1,000-Rs 10,000)
Karnataka Bank	14.28	11,707	2,341	Up to 2% of loan amount (Min. Rs 2,500 & Max. Rs 8,500)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3%

Car Loans

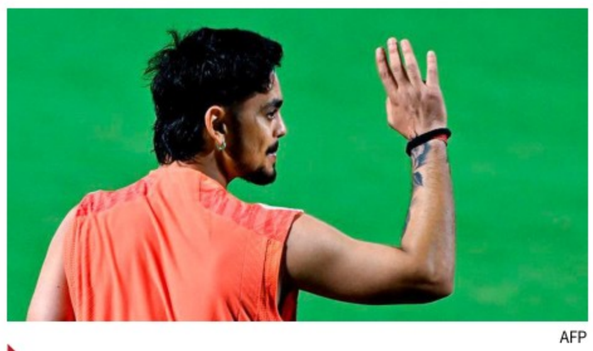
Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years+	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
Union Bank of India	8.70 - 10.45	10,307 - 10,735	Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.75 - 9.60	10,319 - 10,525	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.75 - 12.10	10,319 - 11,148	Up to Rs 500
Canara Bank	8.70 - 11.95	10,307 - 11,110	Nil till 31 December 2023
Bank of India	8.75 - 10.75	10,319 - 10,809	Nil
UCO Bank	8.45 - 10.55	10,246 - 10,759	0.5% (Up to Rs 5,000)
State Bank of India	8.65 - 9.70	10,294 - 10,550	Nil
IDBI Bank	8.75 - 9.55	10,319 - 10,513	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.70 - 13.00	10,307 - 11,377	Nil
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.85 onwards	10,343 onwards	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.00 onwards	10,379 onwards	Rs 999 - Rs 8,500
HDFC Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	0.50% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	9.05 - 11.67	10,391 - 11,039	0.60% (Rs 3,000 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	8.85 onwards	10,343 onwards	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
South Indian Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	1% (Max: Rs 10,000)
IDFC First Bank	9.00 - 13.50	10,379 - 11,505	Up to 3.5%
City Union Bank	14.25 - 14.75	11,699 - 11,829	1.25% (Min: Rs 1,000)

*0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders.
**0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 750 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.20% to borrowers for financing Electric 4 Wheelers. 0.20% concession to existing Housing Loan Borrowers

Rates and charges as on December 13 **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

STEPPING BACK

Kishan withdraws from India's Test squad for series against SA



AFP

Indian wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan has been withdrawn from the Test squad for the tour to South Africa due to personal reasons. "Ishan Kishan has requested the BCCI to be released from the upcoming Test series against South Africa citing personal reasons," a BCCI statement said. K.S. Bharat was named as his replacement.

SPECIAL ONE

I still pinch myself when I see 500: Nathan Lyon still in disbelief

AFP

Australia's veteran off-spinner Nathan Lyon was still in a state of disbelief after completing 500 Test wickets during its thumping 360-run victory over Pakistan. "I still pinch myself when I see my name next to those guys." He became the 8th bowler to take 500 wickets in Test format.

ALL PRAISE

500 Test wickets is huge: captain Cummins lauds Lyon's feat

AP

After his bowlers ran riot, taking the hosts to a thumping 360-run win over Pakistan in the opening Test, Australian skipper Pat Cummins on Sunday lauded spinner Nathan Lyon. 500 Test wickets around the world is huge. Could not be happier for him. He was out for six months with a calf injury and it is great to see him back," he said.

JAIPUR'S HERO

Ajith powers Pink Panthers past Patna Pirates in thrilling contest

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Patna Pirates raced to an eight-point lead in the first half, but Jaipur Pink Panthers clawed its way back and pulled off a 29-28 victory in a Pro Kabaddi League match in Pune on Sunday. V. Ajith Kumar shone with 14 raid points. U Mumba beat Tamil Thalaivas 46-33 as the Guman Singh-Amirmohammad Zafardanesh duo scored 21 points.

Speed merchants Arshdeep and Avesh blow South Africa away

The two bowlers share nine scalps between them, putting on a seam and swing bowling masterclass to set up the win; Phehlukwayo's knock lifts the hosts to 116; Sudharsan scores an unbeaten half-century on debut and Shreyas chips in with a fifty as the visitors cruise home

INDIA IN SA

Press Trust of India
JOHANNESBURG

Pacer Arshdeep Singh bowled a dream first spell and found an ally in an equally menacing Avesh Khan as a second-string Indian team defeated South Africa by eight wickets in the opening ODI here on Sunday.

Going into the match without a single wicket in his previous three ODI appearances, Arshdeep more than made up for it with his maiden five-wicket haul as South Africa was all out for 116 in 27.3 overs. The target was surpassed in just 16.4 overs.

Arshdeep (10-0-37-5) and Avesh (8-3-27-4) ensured that the Men in Blue did not feel the absence of Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah.

Breathing fire: The opening spells from Avesh and Arshdeep sent the hosts tumbling. AFP & AP

A cakewalk

Chasing a target of 117, debutant Sai Sudharsan (55 n.o., 43b, 9x4) showed during his stay at the wicket why he is rated so high.

The southpaw looked elegant while driving on the up and looked strong off the backfoot while pulling the short ball. Against the spinners, he put a big stride forward. His on-drive off Tabraiz Shamsi was a treat to watch.

Sai Sudharsan had the seasoned Shreyas Iyer (52, 45b, 6x4, 1x6) for company, the latter looking in good touch too.

Earlier, the two Indian pacers were on fire and also had a chance to perform hat-tricks.

Four in PowerPlay

Arshdeep blew away the top-order within the first PowerPlay, claiming four wickets; Avesh, who bowled full and fast, hurried the South African batters.

It all began with dismissal of opener Reeza Hendricks (0) who dragged a delivery back onto the stumps.

Golden duck

Rassie van de Dussen, expecting an outswinger, was done in by one that darted back from middle-stump. He was out for a golden duck.

Tony de Zorzi (28, 22b, 2x4, 2x6) chanced his arm before Arshdeep brought in his variation by digging one short. de Zorzi's shot ballooned for skipper K.L. Rahul to complete an easy catch.

However, the wicket that broke the home team's back was Heinrich Klaasen's as he was castled by the left-armer. Soon, skipper Aiden Markram played on, completely beaten for pace. David Miller (2) also fell prey to relentless pressure, a length delivery consuming him.

Andile Phehlukwayo (33, 49b, 3x4, 2x6) took the home team past the 100-run mark before Arshdeep trapped him in front. The dismissal gave the bowler his fifth for the day and the start India would have wished for in the series.

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA
Reeza Hendricks b Arshdeep 0 *(8b)*, Tony de Zorzi c Rahul b Arshdeep 28 *(22b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Rassie van der Dussen lbw b Arshdeep 0 *(1b)*, Aiden Markram b Avesh 12 *(21b, 2x4)*, Heinrich Klaasen b Arshdeep 6 *(9b, 1x4)*, David Miller c Rahul b Avesh 2 *(7b)*, Wiaan Mulder lbw b Avesh 0 *(1b)*, Andile Phehlukwayo lbw b Arshdeep 33 *(49b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Keshav Maharaj c Ruturaj b Avesh 4 *(7b, 1x4)*, Nandre Burger b Kuldeep 7 *(32b)*, Tabraiz Shamsi (not out) 11 *(8b, 2x4)*; Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-10): 13; Total (in 27.3 overs): 116.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-3 (Hendricks, 1.4 overs), 2-3 (van der Dussen, 1.5), 3-42 (de Zorzi, 7.5), 4-52 (Klaasen, 9.6), 5-52 (Markram, 10.1), 6-52 (Mulder, 10.2), 7-58 (Miller, 12.6), 8-73 (Maharaj, 16.1), 9-101 (Phehlukwayo, 25.1).

INDIA BOWLING
Mukesh 7-0-46-0, Arshdeep 10-0-37-5, Avesh 8-3-27-4, Kuldeep 2.3-0-3-1.

INDIA
Ruturaj Gaikwad lbw b Mulder 5 *(10b, 1x4)*, Sai Sudharsan (not out) 55 *(43b, 9x4)*, Shreyas Iyer c Miller b Phehlukwayo 52 *(45b, 6x4, 1x6)*, Tilak Varma (not out) 1 *(3b)*; Extras (w-3, nb-1): 4; Total (for two wkts. in 16.4 overs): 117.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-23 (Ruturaj, 3.4), 2-111 (Shreyas, 15.5).

SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING
Burger 5.4-1-35-0, Mulder 4-0-26-1, Maharaj 3-0-19-0, Shamsi 3-0-22-0, Phehlukwayo 1-0-15-1.

Toss: South Africa.
PoM: Arshdeep.
India won by eight wickets with 200 deliveries remaining to lead three-match series 1-0.
Second ODI: Dec. 19, Gqeberha, 4.30 p.m. IST.

There was a lot of help in the wicket, says skipper Rahul

Shining bright: Debutant opening batter Sai Sudharsan took his chance to make an unbeaten 55. AFP

Reuters
JOHANNESBURG

India was surprised how helpful the Wanderers pitch was for its seamers in the eight-wicket victory in the first ODI against South Africa on Sunday, as captain K.L. Rahul said he thought it was his spinners who would win the day.

India bowled out the hosts for 116, a record low score for South Africa on home soil and then easily chased down the runs with exactly 200 balls to spare.

The tourists won the final T20I on the same wicket on Thursday and Rahul said he believed it would be a game for his spinners.

Instead seamers Arshdeep Singh (five for 37) and Avesh Khan (four for 27) both recorded career-best figures.

"It was completely different to what we expected," Rahul said at the post-match presentation. "We had planned to bring the spinners into the game early after what we saw in the T20 match.

"But there was a lot of help in the wicket and the boys did really well to put the ball into the right areas.

"It is my first ODI win here (South Africa) as a captain. When I was here last time (January 2022) we lost all three, so it is good to get that victory under your belt."

Both sides have rested players ahead of a two-match Test series starting on December 26. There were several new faces in the Indian team, including debutant opening batter Sai Sudharsan, who took his chance with an unbeaten 55 from 43 balls.

South Africa never got going in the game with bat or ball and have much to think about ahead of the second match in the three-game series in Gqeberha on Tuesday.

"Credit to their bowling attack with the lateral movement," home captain Aiden Markram said. "We weren't able to settle and build partnerships.

"We expected it to go around (seam) a little bit. Generally in the day games it does do something for five to seven overs."

Lyon reaches 500-wicket milestone, Aussies win big

Agence France-Presse
PERTH

Nathan Lyon took his 500th Test wicket on Sunday as Australia dismissed Pakistan for just 89 to post a thumping 360-run win in the opening Test.

Chasing 450 for victory, the visitors succumbed meekly with Lyon taking two for 14. Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood grabbed three wickets each.

Lyon reached the milestone when he trapped Faheem Ashraf lbw but there was an agonising wait as it went to review.

He then bowled Aamer Jamal in the same over, joining an elite club of just seven others, including fellow spinners Muttiah Muralitharan and Shane Warne.

Australia declared on day four at 233 for five. Cummins made the call after opener Usman Khawaja was out for a gutsy 90 on a deteriorating pitch after a 126-run partnership with Mitchell Marsh.

Etched in memory: Lyon trapped Ashraf plumb in front for his 500th wicket. AFP

Facing a daunting chase, Pakistan got off to a horror start with Abdullah Shafique out for two in the first over, nicking Starc to wicketkeeper Alex Carey.

Babar Azam and Saud Shakeel put up some resistance. Babar got an edge to Cummins on 14 while Sarfaraz lasted just six balls. Lyon then worked his magic.

The 500-wkt. club in Tests

	M	Wkts
Muralitharan	133	800
Warne	145	708
Anderson	183	690
Kumble	132	619
Broad	167	604
McGrath	124	563
Walsh	132	519
Lyon	123	501

Salt leads fightback as England stuns WI and stays alive

Agence France-Presse
ST. GEORGE'S (GRENADA)

Phil Salt smashed a brilliant unbeaten century as England defeated West Indies by seven wickets to keep their Twenty20 international series alive in Grenada on Saturday.

Salt led an improbable English fightback with 109 not out while middle order batsman Harry Brook also emerged as a hero with an unbeaten 31 as England finished on 226/3 with a ball to spare to eclipse the West Indies' mammoth total of 222/6.

Brook's blistering late knock included 24 off the final over, the 24-year-old Yorkshireman sealing a remarkable victory with a six off West Indies bowler Andre Russell over third man.

The win leaves the best-of-five series finely poised, with West Indies leading 2-1 with two games to play.

Salt. GETTY IMAGES

Man-of-the-match Salt's century from 56 balls included four fours and nine sixes, while Brook's unbeaten 31 came off just seven balls and included four sixes.

The scores: West Indies 222/6 in 20 overs (Pooran 82, Powell 39) lost to England 226/3 in 19.5 overs (Salt 109 n.o., Buttler 51, Brook 31 n.o.).

Barcelona held at Valencia; Arsenal outshines Brighton

EURO LEAGUES

Agencies
VALENCIA

LaLiga champion Barcelona dropped more points in the Spanish title race in a tense 1-1 draw at Valencia on Saturday.

Xavi Hernandez's side moved to third, a point clear of Atletico Madrid, but trails Real Madrid by four and shock leader Girona by six, having played one game more than all three sides.

Joao Felix sent Barcelona ahead in the second half after a slick team move, but Hugo Guillamon's fine strike pegged it back.

In the Premier League, Manchester United ended Liverpool's perfect record at Anfield on Sunday, holding it to a 0-0 draw. A dominant Arsenal beat Brighton at home through second-half goals from Gabriel Jesus and Kai Havertz.

Stalled: Valencia made sure Barcelona couldn't close the gap at the top of the LaLiga table. AFP

The results:

Premier League: Arsenal 2 (Jesus 53, Havertz 87) bt Brighton 0; Brentford 1 (Lewis-Potter 45) lost to Aston Villa 2 (Moreno 77, Watkins 85); West Ham 3 (Kudus 22, 32, Bowen 74) bt Wolves 0; Liverpool 0 drew with Manchester United 0.

LaLiga: Almeria 0 drew with Real Mallorca 0; Valencia 1 (Guillamon 70) drew with Barcelona 1 (Felix 55); Sevilla 0 lost to Getafe 3 (Mayoral 5-pen, Mata 37, Greenwood 80-pen); Real Sociedad 0 drew with Betis 0.

Serie A: Fiorentina 1 (Beltran 78) bt Verona 0; AC Milan 3 (Reijnders 3, Simic 41, Okafor 76) bt Monza 0; Udinese 2 (Lucca 36, Pereyra 55) drew with Sassuolo 2 (Berardi 75-pen, 88-pen).

Napoli 2 (Osimhen 69, Kvaratskhelia 75) bt Cagliari 1 (Pavoletti 72); Torino 1 (Zapata 25) bt Empoli 0; Udinese 2 (Lucca 36, Pereyra 55) drew with Sassuolo (Berardi 75-pen, 88-pen); Bologna 2 (Moro 37, Kristensen 49-og) bt Roma 0.

INBRIEF

Kothari eases past Paras, wins maiden National title

Sourav Kothari (PSPB) defeated Paras Gupta (UP) 6-2 in the final of the 90th National billiards & snooker championships in Chennai on Sunday. This was Kothari's maiden senior title.

The results:
Men's 15-Red Snooker: Final: Sourav Kothari (PSPB) bt Paras Gupta (UP) 6-2 (58-46, 72-34, 0-64, 59-25, 61-54, 21-57, 64-8, 64-25); **Semifinals:** Paras bt Shoaib Khan (Delhi) 5-4 (78-26, 69-17, 35-62, 40-53, 50-73, 63-23, 53-14, 15-60, 94-4); Kothari bt Md. Hussain Khan (RSPB) 5-0 (83-5, 69-11, 104-1, 76-32, 60-59).

Shubh stars as HBR edges Young Orion's

Shubh scored 22 points as HBR BC pipped Young Orion's 49-46 in a boys' category match at the State invitational sub-junior (U-13) basketball championship in Bengaluru on Sunday. In the girls' category, Vimanapura SC thrashed Beagles BC 44-22.

Rising Star too strong for Sandeep HC

Rising Star HC walloped Sandeep HC 11-0 in the KSHA-BHA A-division hockey league in Bengaluru on Sunday. In another encounter, BCYA-A defeated Bangalore United HC 4-2.

Shibli scripts Bangladesh's Asia Cup triumph

Wicketkeeper-batter Ashiqur Rahman Shibli continued his splendid run with a second century in five matches as Bangladesh crushed UAE by 195 runs to win the Under-19 Asia Cup in Dubai on Sunday.

The scores: Bangladesh 282/8 in 50 overs (Ashiqur Rahman Shibli 129, Chowdhury Md Rizwan 60, Ariful Islam 50; Ayman Ahamed 4/52) beat UAE 87 in 24.5 overs (Dhruv Parashar 25 n.o. Maruf Mridha 3/29, Rohanat Doullah Borson 3/26).

LIVE TELECAST

ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 8 p.m.
PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m. onwards
Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Sandeep claims MRF Formula 2000 crown

Chetan clinches the MRF Formula 1600 title also picking up National titles were Gurunath, Deepak and Diljith in their respective categories

MOTORSPORTS

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Scorching the track: Sandeep finished on top in Formula 2000 while Chetan took the honours in the Formula 1600 category. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Diljith.

Gurunath.

Sandeep Kumar and Chetan Surnineni won the MRF Formula 2000 and 1600 titles as the curtains came down on the fourth and final round of the MRF MMSC FMSCI Indian National Car Racing Championship 2023 at the Madras International Circuit on Sunday.

Also picking up the National titles in their respective categories were Gurunath Meiyappan (Race Concepts, Indian Touring Cars), Deepak Ravikumar (Performance Racing, Indian Junior Touring Cars) and T.S. Diljith (DTS Racing, Super Stock and Formula LGB 1300).

The championship battle in the MRF Formula 2000 went down to the wire. Sandeep did just enough to pick up crucial points and pip Arya Singh by three points to claim the crown. Incidentally, both the MRF F2000 races were won by Aditya Swaminathan.

Likewise, Chetan won Race-1 and finished second in Race-2 behind Viswas Vijayaraj to claim the championship in the MRF F1600 category. The 48-year-old Gurunath needed just five points going into the fourth round, where he finished fourth in Race-1 and third in Race-2 to seal the ITC crown with a tally of 171 points.

The results (provisional, 8 laps unless mentioned):

MRF F2000 (Race-2, 10 laps): 1. Aditya Swaminathan (15:59.086); 2. Arya Singh (15:59.657); 3. Jaden Rahman Pariat (16:09.957). **Race-3:** 1. Aditya (15:54.237); 2. Jaden (15:54.507); 3. Arya (16:00.352).

MRF Formula 1600 (Race-2, 10 laps): 1. Chetan Sureneni (17:12.071); 2. Viswas Vijayaraj (17:16.562); 3. Aman Nagdev (17:19.278). **Race-3:** 1. Viswas (16:39.489); 2. Chetan (16:39.738); 3. Veer Sheth (16:47.179).

Indian Touring Cars (Race-1): 1. Ritesh Rai (Arka Motorsports) (15:01.439); 2. Biren Pithawalla (Team N1) (15:08.362); 3. Arjun Balu (Race Concepts) (15:08.858). **Race-2 (10 laps):** 1. Ritesh (22:08.620); 2. Biren (22:12.222); 3. Gurunath Meiyappan (Race Concepts) (22:23.804).

Indian Junior Touring Cars (Race-1): 1. Deepak Ravikumar (Team Performance Racing) (15:27.357); 2. Akkineni Anand Prasad (Team Performance Racing) (15:31.118); 3. Haktim Shabbir Jamnagarwala (Team Performance Racing) (15:37.365). **Race-2 (10 laps):** 1. Deepak (22:34.641); 2. Akkineni Anand (22:37.484); 3. Haktim (22:37.919).

Super Stock (Race-1): 1. Zahan Commissariat (16:37.212); 2. T.S. Dilijith (DTS Racing) (16:37.615); 3. Justin Singh (Redline Racing) (16: 40.756). **Race-2 (10 laps):** 1. Dilijith (23:40.218); 2. Zahan (23.41.591); 3. Jarshan Anand (DB Motorsport) (23:54.807).

Formula LGB 1300 (Race-1): 1. Viswas Vijayaraj (DTS Racing) (14:53.894); 2. T.S. Diljith (DTS Racing) (14:54.251); 3. Bala Prasath (DTS Racing) (15:10.025). **Race-2:** 1. Dhruvh Goswami (MSport) (25:18.849); 2. M. Abhay (MSport) (25:19.081); 3. Diljith (25:23.650).

Mavericks outclass Wizards to be crowned champions of TPL

Sports Bureau
PUNE

Triumphant: Champion Bengaluru SG Mavericks in the Tennis Premier League in Pune on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vishnu Vardhan and Arina Rodionova played a vibrant mixed doubles match to beat Maria Timofeeva and Anirudh Chandrasekar 14-6 that helped Bengaluru SG Maverics to a 41-28 victory over Bengal Wizards in the final of the fifth edition of Tennis Premier League on the charcoal grey courts of the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex on Sunday.

The teams were level after the two singles matches, won by Timofeeva against Arina and Ramkumar Ramanathan against Sriram Balaji at 20-20. Arina rose to the challenge in the mixed doubles match which witnessed many arguments and disputed calls. Arina and Vishnu were able to stay focused and take the match away from the Bengal team with their imaginative play and crisp execution.

Thereafter, it was a simple task of winning seven points in the men's doubles match. Ramkumar and Vishnu cruised to 7-2 win over Sriram Balaji and Anirudh who had done remarkably well to take the team this far.

It was celebration time for the Bengaluru team with coach M. Balachandran as mentor. The team was truly dominant right through after the 39-41 loss to Punjab Patriots in the first match of the league.

For her energetic performance in the final, Arina Rodionova was declared the 'player of the match'

The champion was presented ₹15,00,000.

The results: Final: **Bengaluru SG Mavericks bt Bengal Wizards 41-28** (Arina Rodionova lost to Maria Timofeeva 9-11; Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Sriram Balaji 11-9; Arina & Vishnu Vardhan bt Timofeeva & Anirudh Chandrasekar 14-6; Ramkumar & Vishnu bt Balaji & Anirudh 7-2). **Semifinals**: **Bengaluru SG Mavericks bt Delhi Binny's Brigade 41-35** (Arina Rodionova bt Sahaja Yamalapalli 11-9; Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Dennis Novak 12-8; Arina & Vishnu Vardhan bt Sahaja & Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan 11-9; Ramkumar & Vishnu vs Dennis & Jeevan 7-9). **Bengal Wizards bt Punjab Patriots 41-32** (Maria Timofeeva bt Conny Perrin 12-8; Sriram Balaji bt Digvijay Pratap Singh 14-6; Timofeeva & Anirudh tied Conny & Arjun Kadhe 10-10; Balaji & Anirudh vs Digvijay & Arjun 5-8).

Ramkumar to spearhead India

Kamesh Srinivasan
NEW DELHI

Ramkumar. FILE PHOTO

Ramkumar Ramanathan will spearhead the Indian challenge in the Davis Cup tie against Pakistan to be played in Pakistan on February 3 and 4.

Sriram Balaji, Yuki Bhambri, Saketh Myneni, and Niki Poonacha will be the other members of the team.

Making the announcement, the secretary general of the All India Tennis Association (AITA), Anil Dhupar, stated that the selection was done keeping in mind various factors apart from the availability of the players.

The leading singles players Sumit Nagal and Mukund Sasikumar had expressed their reluctance to make the Davis Cup team owing to their professional commitments.

The selection committee meeting was conducted virtually by chairman Nandan Bal. The meeting was attended by Balram Singh, Mustafa Ghouse, Sai Jayalakshmy, Rohit Rajpal, Zeeshan Ali and Anil Dhupar.

The team: Ramkumar Ramanathan, Sriram Balaji, Yuki Bhambri, Saketh Myneni, Niki Poonacha. **Reserve:** Digvijay Pratap Singh. **Captain:** Rohit Rajpal; **Coach:** Zeeshan Ali.

Ashoka fancied for the feature event

HYDERABAD: Trainer D. Netto's Ashoka, who won well in his last start, should repeat in the Basalath Jah Memorial Cup Div.I, the main event of Monday's (Dec. 18) races.
1. NIRMAL PLATE (1,100m) (Terms), 2-y-o only (Cat. II) – 1.15 p.m.: 1. Bellingham (6) Soufyane J. Moulin 56, 2. Born Brave (2) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 56, 3. Desert Hero (4) Santosh Raj 56, 4. Sargent (7) G. Naresh 56, 5. Cannon Rose (1) P. Sai Kumar 54.5, 6. Hoping Queen (5) Mohit Singh 54.5 and 7. Vital Sign (3) Abhay Singh 54.5.
1. BELLINGHAM, 2. HOPING QUEEN, 3. CANNON ROSE.
2. STARRY SCENE PLATE (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) -- 1.50:
1. Saint Emilion (6) Mukesh Kumar 60, 2. Santa Barbara (11) Md. Ekram Alam 60, 3. Rochelle (3) Santosh Raj 57.5, 4. Silver Lining (10) Afroz Khan 57.5, 5. Planet Super (5) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 56.5, 6. Indian Temple (8) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 56, 7. Lights On (2) Nakhat Singh 56, 8. Battle On (12) P. Sai Kumar 55.5, 9. Alcahol Free (1) Ashad Asbar 55, 10. Muaser (7) P. Ajeeth Kumar 55, 11. Royal Pal (9) R.S. Jodha 55, 12. Deccan Daisy (4) Ajay Kumar 53.5 and 13. Chenab (13) G. Naresh 53.
1. SANTA BARBARA, 2. SILVER LINING, 3. ROCHELLE.
3. BASALATH JAH MEMORIAL CUP (Div. II) (1,200m), rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II) -- 2.25:
1. Kingston (3) R.S. Jodha 60, 2. Watch My Stride (5) S.J. Moulin 60, 3. City Of Bliss (9) Ajay Kumar 59, 4. Brilliant Star (8) Suraj Narredu 55, 5. Exotic Dancer (4) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 54, 6. Commanding Knight (6) P. Sai Kumar 53.5, 7. High Reward (2) Nakhat Singh 52.5, 8. Morior Invictus (7) Surya Prakash 51.5, 9. Avancia (1) P. Ajeeth Kumar 51 and 10. Carlisle (10) Afroz Khan 50.
1. BRILLIANT STAR, 2. EXOTIC DANCER, 3. COMMANDING KNIGHT.
4. CYNDY PLATE (1,600m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) -- 3.00:
1. Winning Streak (2) Mukesh Kumar 60, 2. Hugh Capet (5) Vivek G 59, 3. Ivanhoe (6) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 58, 4. Miss Marvellous (9) Afroz Khan 58, 5. She Can (10) Ajay Kumar 57.5, 6. Barbet (7) Suraj Narredu 54.5, 7. Thunderstruck (1) Abhay Singh 54.5, 8. Divine Destiny (3) Surya Prakash 53.5, 9. Grand Duke (4) Nakaht Singh 53.5, 10. Star Medal (8) Md. Ekram Alam 53.5 and 11. Colt Pistol (11) P. Sai Kumar 51.5.
1. SHE CAN, 2. IVANHOE, 3. HUGH CAPET.
5. PALAMPET CUP (1,200m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) -- 3.35:
1. Proud Mary (10) Suraj Narredu 60, 2. Malibu (3) Md. Ekram Alam 57, 3. Alexina (7) P. Sai Kumar 55.5, 4. Dyanoosh (5) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 53.5, 5. First Class (4) Vivek G 53.5, 6. Star Racer (6) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 53.5, 7. Cabello (1) Santosh Raj 52.5, 8. Capital Gain (2) Abhay Singh 52.5, 9. Encore (8) R.S. Jodha 52.5 and 10. Only My Way (9) Afroz Khan 52.5.
1. PROUD MARY, 2. ALEXINA, 3. CABELLO.
6. BASALATH JAH MEMORIAL CUP (Div. I) (1,200m), rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II) -- 4.10:
1. Ashoka (9) A. Imran Khan 60, 2. Beauty Blaze (4) N.B. Kuldeep 57.5, 3. Unsung Hero (8) Mukesh Kumar 57, 4. Briar Ridge (10) P. Sai Kumar 54.5, 5. The King N I (6) Ashad Asbar 54.5, 6. Blissful (2) R.S. Jodha 54, 7. Best Buddy (3) Md. Ekram Alam 52.5, 8. Amyra (11) Afroz Khan 52, 9. Stunning Force (7) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 51.5, 10. Miss Little Angel (1) Ajay Kumar 51 and 11. City Of Blessing (5) Santosh Raj 50.5.
1. ASHOKA, 2. BEST BUDDY, 3. BEAUTY BLAZE.
7. CHAITANYA RATHAM PLATE (1,400m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) -- 4.45:
1. Worcester (1) Mukesh Kumar 62.5, 2. Queen Empress (4) S.J. Moulin 62, 3. Honourable Lady (3) A. Imran Khan 61.5, 4. Burgundy Black (6) Vivek G 61, 5. Alpine Girl (8) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 57, 6. Club Queen (2) Md. Ekram Alam 56.5, 7. Sweet Whisper (9) Nakhat Singh 55.5, 8. Soorya Vahan (7) Md. Ismail 55, 9. D Battle (10) P. Ajeeth Kumar 53.5, 10. It's My Life (11) Ashad Asbar 52.5, 11. Jet Falcon (5) Surya Prakash 50.5 and 12. My Way Or Highway (12) Abhay Singh 50.
1. HONOURABLE LADY, 2. BURGUNDY BLACK, 3. ALPINE GIRL.
Day's Best : ASHOKA.
Jackpot : 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.
Mini Jackpot : (i) 1, 2, 3 & 4. (ii) 4, 5, 6 & 7.
Treble : (i) 2, 3 & 4, (ii) 5, 6 & 7.
Tanala : All races.

Arjun defeats Predke; Gukesh holds Parham

CHESS

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Arjun Erigaisi beat Serbia's Alexandr Predke in the third round of the Chennai Grand Masters Chess Championship at The Leela Palace hotel on Sunday.

Iran's Parham Maghsoodloo could only manage to draw with white versus D. Gukesh.

Having lost to Pavel Eljanov (Ukraine) and drawn with Levon Aronian (USA) in the first two rounds, Maghsoodloo needed to win all the remaining five rounds to secure the overall 5.5 points he needs to qualify for the 2024 Candidates tournament.

He now has only one point from the three rounds and even if he wins the rest of the four rounds, he could only get to a maximum of 5 points and most likely out of the Candidates race.

Sanan Sjugirov (Hungary), favoured to win the tournament by the Dutch chess couple Anish Giri and Sopiko Guramishvili on the commentary, settled for a draw with white against Aronian.

But he's still the joint-leader with P. Harikrishna, who drew with Eljanov. Both have two points.

The results (third round):
Parham Maghsoodloo (Irn) 0.5 (1) drew with D. Gukesh 0.5 (1.5); Sanan Sjugirov (Hun) 0.5 (2) drew with Levon Aronian (USA) 0.5 (1.5); P. Harikrishna 0.5 (2) drew with Pavel Eljanov (Ukr) 0.5 (1.5); Arjun Erigaisi 1 (1.5) bt Alexandr Predke (Srb) 0 (1).

Intense battle: Arjun made the right moves against Serbia's Predke. M. VEDHAN

Kerala blanks Tamil Nadu to finish on top

KHELO PARA GAMES

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Kerala remained unbeaten to finish on top in Cerebral Palsy football, winning 7-0 win against Tamil Nadu in the final game on the last day of action at the inaugural Khelo India Para Games here on Sunday. A. Growth scored four goals and Y. Jayasurya scored three for the winner.

Haryana finished on top of the medals table with 105 medals including 40 of the 173 gold at stake, 39 silver and 26 bronze medals. Uttar Pradesh was second with 62 medals followed by Tamil Nadu (20 gold, 8 silver, 14 bronze).

Over 1450 para athletes from 32 states and Union Territories participated in the event across seven disciplines.

Other results:

Table tennis: Men: Class-4: Sumit Sehgal bt Ramesh Chaudhary 3-0.

Class-8: Gajanan Parmar bt Shashidhar Kulkarni 3-1.

Class-5: Raj Aravindan Alagar bt Pawan Kumar Sharma 3-0.

Women: Class-6: Poonam bt Bhavika Kukadiya 3-1.

Class 9-10: Baby Sahana bt Pruthvi Barve 3-0.

Class-7: Prachi Pandey bt Dhwani Shah 3-0.

Kaushini and Prapti do it for Bengal

NATL. TABLE TENNIS

Rakesh Rao
PANCHKULA

Quality matches were at a premium but there was no dearth of exciting individual encounters on the second day of the team championship in the 85th National table tennis championship here.

Among the quarterfinalists of the previous edition at Jammu, host Haryana was the only team to fall short in both sections on Sunday. AAI's trio of F. R. S. Snehit, Jeet Chandra and Deepit Patil won their matches 3-1 to complete Haryana's 3-0 rout in the pre-quarterfinals.

The Haryana women, relying mainly on rising talent Suhana Saini, ran into a more determined Bengal and lost 1-3. A sketchy Prapti Sen won two singles, both in five games, as Bengal set up a quarterfinal clash against defending champion Reserve Bank of India.

In a match that was far closer than what the margin suggests, Prapti bounced back from a two-game deficit against Haryana's Prithoki Chakraborty to win 10-12, 9-11, 11-4, 11-5, 11-4 and put Bengal ahead.

Suhana expectedly tamed 14-year-old talent Syndrela Das 11-8, 12-10, 5-11, 11-4 to restore parity.

In the crucial third singles, Kaushini Nath produced a very effective performance despite her movements being seriously hampered by a waist brace she wore to support her lower-back and shut out a defensive Anjali Rohilla 11-3, 11-5, 11-5.

That meant Suhana needed to win against Prapti and keep Haryana alive in the contest. The youngster rallied after losing two games, saved two tie-points in the fourth to force the decider. Prapti finally got her act right after 6-6 and raced away with the last five points for a 14-12, 12-10, 9-11, 14-16, 11-6 triumph.

The results (team championship pre-quarterfinals):

Men: Petroleum bt Orissa 3-0; Uttar Pradesh bt Karnataka 3-1; Airports Authority of India bt Haryana 3-0; Tamil Nadu bt Assam 3-0; Delhi bt Uttarakhand 3-0; Bengal bt Punjab 3-0; Maharashtra bt Gujarat 3-1; Telangana bt Himachal Pradesh 3-0.

Women: Reserve Bank of India bt Rajasthan 3-0; Bengal bt Haryana 3-1; Karnataka bt Telangana 3-0; Maharashtra bt Madhya Pradesh 3-0; Delhi bt Chandigarh 3-1; Railways bt Pondicherry 3-0; Gujarat bt Kerala 3-1; Tamil Nadu bt Andhra Pradesh 3-0.

Young. AP

Young hits century as NZ beats Bangladesh

Agence France-Presse
DUNEDIN

Opener Will Young made a quickfire century as New Zealand beat Bangladesh by 44 runs on Sunday in the rain-affected first ODI in Dunedin on Sunday.

The home side burst into life in the final stages to post an imposing 239 for seven in 30 overs. Pursuing a revised target of 245, Bangladesh was restricted to 200 for nine.

New Zealand bounced back after losing two wickets in the game's opening over when seamer Shoriful Islam had Rachin Ravindra and Henry Nicholls both caught without scoring.

The scores: New Zealand 239/7 in 30 overs (Will Young 105, Tom Latham 92) bt Bangladesh 200/9 in 30 overs (Anamul Haque 43, Towhid Hridoy 33, Afif Hossain 38).

Lakshya looks for course correction in Nationals

The shuttler will be eager to win his maiden crown; women's singles field is open in the absence of Sindhu; Airports Authority of India is the favourite in both the men's and women's sections

BADMINTON

K. Keerthivasan
GUWAHATI

Lakshya Sen will be the star attraction in the 76th Inter-State-Inter-Zonal and 85th Senior National badminton championships to be held here from December 18 to 24.

The 22-year-old, however, will compete only in the open events (singles) starting on December 20.

The team events (men & women) beginning on Monday will witness the seven teams (winners of zonal & inter-institutional events plus the host) fighting for the honours.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) appears to be the favourite on paper in both the men's and women's sections.

The team is spearheaded by India No. 1 Kartikey Gulshan Kumar and Alap Mishra (No. 5) in singles, and with support from doubles specialists, Ravi Krishna and Achutaditya Rao.

Eye on the prize: Lakshya will be keen to go one step further after losses in the finals in 2017 and 2019. FILE PHOTO

Formidable

The AAI women's team, too, looks formidable. With Mansi Singh (India No.4) in singles, and India No.1 and No.3 in doubles Priya Devi Konjengbam and Arul Bala, AAI has the wherewithal to bag the crown.

Indian Railways, Central Zone champion in men and women categories, is expected to offer quite a tough challenge in the men's category. In its ranks, it has India No. 6 Mithun Manjunath and Kaushal Dharmamer (India ranked 13) with doubles specialists Hemanagendra Babu and Sai Pratheek for company.

No pushover

The Karnataka men's team will be no pushover as it has reigning World junior championship bronze medallist Ayush Shetty and solid doubles players Prakash Raj and H.V. Nithin.

Multiple champions Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) will not take part in the team events as it couldn't participate in the Inter-institution championships (a qualifying event for Nationals) due to the non-availability of its top players.

In men's singles, Lakshya will not have it easy. Twice, in 2017 (Patna) and 2019 (Guwahati), he lost in the final to Sourabh Verma. Sourabh is not playing here. Of course, Lakshya will have to fight it out with Mithun Manjunath, Ayush Shetty, Kiran George and Priyanshu Rajawat.

The women's singles field appears open in the absence of P.V. Sindhu. Anyone from the lot – Aakarshi Kashyap, Malvika Bansod, Ashmita Chaliha, Unnati Hooda and Anupama Upadhyaya can win.

The teams: Men: Assam, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Maharashtra, AAI, Indian Railways; **Women:** Assam, AP, West Bengal, Punjab, AAI, Maharashtra, Indian Railways.

Multiple champions Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) will not take part in the team events
Indian Railways, Central Zone champion in men's and women's categories, is expected to offer quite a tough challenge
Lakshya will have to fight it out with Mithun Manjunath, Ayush Shetty, Kiran George and Priyanshu Rajawat in men's singles

THE HINDU GROUP

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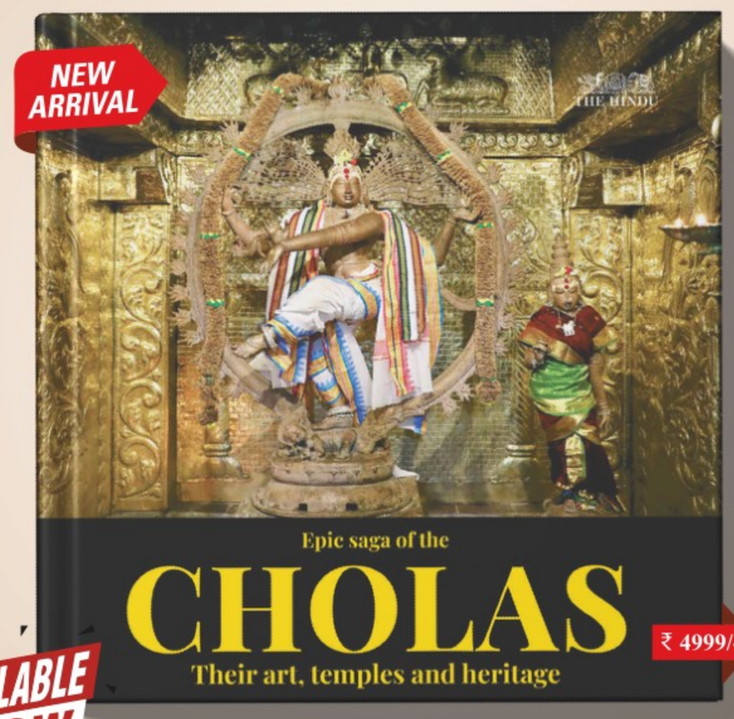
The grandeur and heritage of the Chola dynasty from the Tamil country, which has fascinated scholars and the layman alike, has been brought out in this coffee-table book by *The Hindu* when the spotlight has been turned on the Cholas.



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NOTICE/INVITATION FOR E-AUCTION FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Pursuant to attachment of Immovable properties by the Government under the provisions of the Karnataka Protection of Interest of Depositors in Financial Establishments Act, 2004 (KPIDFE Act) and pursuant to the absolute attachment order by the Hon'ble Special Court the Special Officer & Competent Authority (under KPIDFE-IMA and other Scam), is issuing notice for e-auction of the immovable property through e-auction on 'as is where is and whatever there is basis'.

The intending bidders will be required to furnish Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (as mentioned against each auction in the e-portal provided by the Service Provider/Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only).

Short description of the Immovable Property

SCHEDULE 'A' PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing BBMP Municipal No: 41/3, Old No: 41, (PID No:94-43-41/3), formed out of survey No: 93/3 and 94/2, totally measuring 22798 Sq.ft situated at Nagawara Main Road, Kadugondanahalli, Bangalore which comes under the jurisdiction of BBMP, Old ward No:94 and New ward no:30, totally measuring 22798 Sq.ft at Nagawara main Road, Kadugondanahalli,Bangalore and bounded as follows:

East by: Conservancy **West by:** Partly by Nagawar Main Road and partly by remaining portion of the same property **North by:** Private property **South by:** Petrol Bunk and remaining portion of the same property

Google Map: **https://maps.app.goo.gl/PVNw22hEM7Z19oev8** Latitude and Longitude: 13°01'06.7"N 77°37'09.9"E

SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of the north west portion of schedule A property presently bearing BBMP Muncipal No. 41/3, Old No: 41, (PID No: 94-43-41/3) formed out of survey Nos: 93/3 and 94/2 measuring East to west 70 ft, North to south 10 ft, totally measuring 2800 Sq.ft situated at Nagawar main road, Kadugondahalli, Bangalore Bounded as follows: **East by:** Private property **West by:** Nagawara Main Road **North by:** Private property **South by:** Private property

Sl No.	PROPERTY DETAILS (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)	RESERVE PRICE (Rs)	EMD (Rs)	CLEAR TITLE
1.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.303, Situated at on the 2nd Floor, Block No.1, or "A" Block, Unit No. 3 of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 960 Sqft. Along with Single Car Parking In stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with proportionate undivided share in the land.	Rs. 54,80,000/- (Rs. Fifty Four Lakhs Eighty Thousand only)	Rs.5,48,000/- (Rs. Five Lakh Forty Eight Thousand only)	(Special Officer & Competent Authority, KPIDFE Cases) Clear Title by Court in order No MISC. 243/2022 and as per Khata Certificate issued by the BBMP
2.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.414, Situated at on the 3rd Floor, Block No.2, or "B" Block, unit no. 14 of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 1100 Sqft. Along with Single Car Parking In stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with proportionate undivided share in the land.	Rs. 62,50,000/- (Rs. Sixty Two Lakhs Fifty Thousand only)	Rs.6,25,000/- (Rs. Six Lakh Twenty Five Thousand only)	
3.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.210, Situated at on the 1st Floor, Block No.2, or "B" Block, unit no. 10 of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 1080 Sqft. Along with Single Car Parking In stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with proportionate undivided share in the land.	Rs.61,40,000/- (Rs. Sixty One Lakhs Forty Thousand only)	Rs.6,14,000/- (Rs. Six Lakh Fourteen Thousand only)	
4.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.314, Situated at on the 2nd Floor, Block No.2, or "B" Block, unit no. 14 of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 1100 Sqft. Along with Single Car Parking In stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with proportionate undivided share in the land.	Rs. 62,50,000/- (Rs. Sixty Two Lakhs Fifty Thousand only)	Rs.6,25,000/- (Rs. Six Lakh Twenty Five Thousand only)	
5.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.407, Situated at on the 3rd Floor, Block No.1, or "A" Block, unit no. 7 of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 1085 Sqft. Along with Single Car Parking In stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with proportionate undivided share in the land.	Rs. 61,67,500/- (Rs. Sixty One Lakhs Sixty Seven Thousand Five Hundred only)	Rs.6,16,000/- (Rs. Six Lakh Sixteen Thousand only)	(Special Officer & Competent Authority, KPIDFE Cases) Clear Title by Court in order No MISC. 243/2022 and as per Khata Certificate issued by the BBMP
6.	All the piece and Residential Flat No. 109, Situated at on the ground Floor, Block No.2, or "B" Block, unit no. 9 of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 1000 Sqft. Along with Single Car Parking In stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with proportionate undivided share in the land.	Rs. 57,00,000/- (Rs. Fifty Seven Lakhs only)	Rs.5,70,000/- (Rs. Five Lakh Seventy Thousand only)	
7.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.301, Situated at on the 2nd Floor, Block No.1, or "A" Block, unit no. 1 of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 1050 Sqft. Along with Single Car Parking In stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with proportionate undivided share in the land.	Rs. 59,75,000/- (Rs. Fifty Nine Lakhs Seventy Five Thousand only)	RS.5,97,000/- (Rs. Five Lakh Ninety Seven Thousand only)	
8.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.FF-212, Situated at on the 1st Floor, "B" Block, of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 975 Sqft. together with one reserved car park space bearing No. FF-212, in the stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with 192 sq.ft. of undivided share, right, title, interest and ownership in the land.	Rs. 55,62,500/- (Rs. Fifty Five Lakhs Sixty Two Thousand Five Hundred only)	Rs.5,56,000/- (Rs. Five Lakh Fifty Six Thousand only)	(Special Officer & Competent Authority, KPIDFE Cases) Clear Title by Court in order No MISC. 236/2022 and as per Khata Certificate issued by the BBMP
9.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.FF-203, Situated at on the 1st Floor, "A" Block, of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 960 Sqft. together with one reserved car park space bearing No. FF-203, in the stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with 190 sq.ft. of undivided share, right, title, interest and ownership in the land.	Rs. 54,80,000/- (Rs. Fifty Four Lakhs Eighty Thousand only)	Rs.5,48,000/- (Rs. Five Lakh Forty Eight Thousand only)	
10.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.FF-204, Situated at on the 1st Floor, "A" Block, of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 980 Sqft. together with one reserved car park space bearing No. FF-204, in the stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with 195 sq.ft. of undivided share, right, title, interest and ownership in the land.	Rs. 55,90,000/- (Rs. Fifty Five Lakhs Ninety Thousand only)	Rs.5,59,000/- (Rs. Five Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand only)	
11.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.FF-215, Situated at on the 1st Floor, "B" Block, of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 1025 Sqft. together with one reserved car park space bearing No. FF-215, in the stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with 210 sq.ft. of undivided share, right, title, interest and ownership in the land.	Rs. 58,37,500/- (Rs. Fifty Eight Lakhs Thirty Seven Thousand Five Hundred only)	Rs.5,83,000/- (Rs. Five Lakh Eighty Three Thousand only)	
12.	All the piece and Residential Flat No.TF-412, Situated at on the 3rd Floor, "B" Block, of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 975 Sqft. together with one reserved car park space bearing No. TF-412, in the stilt floor, comprising of Two Bedrooms, One Hall, Kitchen, attach bathrooms, Dinning, and Balcony etc., along with 192 sq.ft. of undivided share, right, title, interest and ownership in the land.	Rs. 55,62,500/- (Rs. Fifty Five Lakhs Sixty Two Thousand Five Hundred only)	Rs.5,56,000/- (Rs. Five Lakh Fifty Six Thousand only)	
13.	All the piece and Residential bearing Flat No.418, Situated at on the Fifth Floor, Block No.1, or "A" Block, of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 1119 Sqft. Along with proportionate undivided share in the land.	Rs. 63,54,500/- (Rs. Sixty Three Lakhs Fifty Four Thousand Five Hundred only)	Rs.6,35,000/- (Rs. Six Lakh Thirty Five Thousand only)	(Special Officer & Competent Authority, KPIDFE Cases) Clear Title by Court in order No. MISC. 240/2022 and as per Khata Certificate issued by the BBMP
14.	All the piece and Residential bearing Flat No.219, Situated at on the Third Floor, Block No.2, or "B" Block, of the Multistoried Apartment known as "AALA DREAMS" constructed on the Schedule "A" Property with super built up area of 1035 Sqft. Along with proportionate undivided share in the land.	Rs. 58,92,500/-(Rs. Fifty Eight Lakhs Ninety Two Thousand Five Hundred only)	Rs.5,89,000/- (Rs. Five Lakh Eighty Nine Thousand only)	

Bid Increase Value (Rs)	Date of Inspection & time	Date of Pre-bid meeting & time	Last Date of Submission of Bids & EMD submission	Date & Time of E Auction
25,000/- (Rs. Twenty five thousand only)	17th January 2024 11:00am to 05:00pm	18th January 2024 3 pm to 4 pm	19th January 2024 until 5pm	22nd January 2024 11 am to 1 pm

For Registration & Online Auction, you can login to: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in (Helpdesk No: 080-46010000, 080-68948777) The interested bidders who require auction related information can contact Joint Secretary, Office of the Special Officer & Competent Authority, 3rd Floor, Podium Block, Visveswariah Towers, Dr.Ambedkar Veedi, Bengaluru-560001, e-mail ID:splocaeauction@gmail.com or Contact Mob. No 8217203930.

Sd/-
Special Officer & Competent Authority
(Under KPIDFE –IMA & Other Scam) Bengaluru,

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 13-12-2023

DIPR/2590/2023-24

AIFF altered minutes regarding removal of Shaji Prabhakaran

It is now learnt that the football association first circulated draft minutes of the November 9 meeting to the executive committee members on December 14

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The draft minutes of the executive committee meeting of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) held last month relating to the sacking of general secretary Shaji Prabhakaran were changed within two days, it is learnt. The move came after the Delhi High Court stayed his removal.

A single bench of Justice Subramonium Prasad of the Delhi HC on December 8 had ordered an interim stay on Prabhakaran's sacking, holding that "the petitioner has been able to make out a *prima facie* case in his favour that the termination is completely contrary to the procedure as laid down in the Constitution of AIFF".

Article 32 clause 11 of the AIFF Constitution says that "the executive committee shall appoint or dismiss the general secretary on the proposal of the (AIFF) president".

Crying foul: Prabhakaran had said that his termination issue was not placed before the committee. FILE PHOTO: THULASI KAKKAT

Prabhakaran, through his counsel, had contended that the issue regarding his termination "was not even placed before the executive committee". Prabhakaran was sacked from his post on November 7 for "breach of trust" and the AIFF executive committee endorsed the decision in a meeting two days later. The termination letter served on him was signed by AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey, vice-president N.A. Haris and treasurer Kipa Ajay.

It is now learnt that the AIFF first circulated draft minutes of the November 9 meeting to the executive committee members on December 14, more than one month following the actual meeting and a few days after the Delhi High Court interim stay on Prabhakaran's removal.

The AIFF then sent revised draft minutes on December 16 in which a paragraph was inserted, saying: "Ratification of decisions of Emergency Committee meeting dated November 7, 2023 relating to the termination of secretary-general Shaji Prabhakaran and appointment of acting secretary-general M. Satyanarayan".

The section relating to the Emergency Committee meeting was not mentioned in the earlier draft minutes of December 14. A senior official of the AIFF, when contacted, refused to comment on why the changes were made in the revised draft minutes.

"The matter is sub-judice and we are going to submit the minutes to the court, so we can't give any comments," the official said.

AIFF plans to host few 2034 WC matches in India

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) is mulling a plan to host a few matches of the 2034 FIFA World Cup, set to be held in Saudi Arabia, according to an internal circular of the national sports body.

Last month, FIFA, the world governing body of football, had confirmed following the October 31 deadline that Saudi Arabia was the sole bidder for the 2034 World Cup.

An Emergency Congress of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) held on October 18 had supported Saudi Arabia's bid. India had also supported the move.

It is learnt that AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey told the executive committee members that India should think of hosting a few matches of the 2034 World Cup.

The 48-team 2034 World Cup will have 104 matches and the idea could be that a few of them –around 10 matches –could be held in India.

"The president informed the house that India should think or plan to work towards being a co-host for the World Cup in 2034," the draft minutes of the AIFF Executive Committee held on November 9 said.

The FIFA had restricted the hosting eligibility of the 2034 World Cup to Asia or Oceania after it made the decision to host the 2030 edition on three continents (Africa, Europe and South America).

Saudi Arabia is also hosting the AFC Asian Cup in 2027 after India backed out of a bid to host the continental show-piece.

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Undeterred by dyslexia

While there is awareness of learning disabilities in primary and middle school, what about students at the senior levels and in higher education?

Shweta Sharan

When Bengaluru-based student Jordan Hereford was diagnosed with learning disabilities, his family homeschooled him until Class 10. They struggled to find a senior secondary school but finally discovered a CISCE-affiliated school in Bengaluru that supported him during this crucial stage. This proved to be a turning point.

"He topped Class 12 in Economics and Accountancy, and won five prizes," says his sister, Tamara. "He studied Journalism, International Relations and Public Policy in St. Joseph's University in Bengaluru, which also encouraged him."

While there is more awareness in schools in India at the primary and middle school levels, what happens to students with learning difficulties at the senior secondary and college levels?

At the secondary and senior secondary levels, many students with learning disabilities opt for the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), a national level education board in India that provides flexibility in taking exams and a choice of different subjects.

Positive developments

Mangala Jayachandran, Director of Special Education (Retired) at Lady Andal Venkatasubba Rao School and Head, Lady Andal House of Children (NIOS), is a pioneer in the special education space in Chennai. She observes that when schools ramp up support in the senior secondary level, remarkable things happen.

"Children who were sent away from other schools bloomed under our care and have become entrepreneurs, artists, CEOs and achievers in sports," she says. "Most of our students have pursued their higher studies either in reputed institutions in Chennai or abroad, or even vocational training."

She believes that there are positive developments for students with dyslexia in higher education, with procedures to secure eligibility certificates and concessions extended by the Tamil Nadu Government in the undergraduate college level. Every education board in India offers exam concessions and access arrangements for students with special needs.

Arnav Jain, a student with learning disabilities, is currently in the final year of Bachelor of Business Management and Marketing (BBMM) with a specialisation in Marketing at the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) in Mumbai, which allows the use of a laptop, a scribe and a read-aloud service for dyslexic students. He also hosts a podcast called *Fireside Chat Show with Arnav Jain*, which explores his journey when it comes to dyslexia.

He finds that many colleges and universities in India are unwilling to accept students with learning difficulties or those who finish senior secondary exams in NIOS. "Colleges feel that students with learning disabilities may not be able to cope with the rigour of an undergraduate programme," he says. Jain scored very well in the NPAT, the NMIMS entrance exam.

Vocational programmes

The Bachelor of Vocation degree is a great way for students with learning disabilities to access training embedded in real-life work environments. Many top colleges in India now offer a B.Voc.

It's not just dyslexics who benefit from vocational training. The German vocational education and training system is renowned worldwide and can be a great way to address the global skills gap. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) stated in 2022 that Bachelor of Vocation courses will be treated on par with an engineering diploma or a B.Sc. for a lateral entry into B.Tech.

D. Chandrasekhar, president of the Madras Dyslexia Association, observes that students with learning disabilities do not automatically get accepted into colleges. Acceptance is sporadic, largely due to the painstaking efforts of the parents.

"Students with learning disabilities mostly take up visual communication and home science, but colleges should make other majors and disciplines accessible to them," he says.

Until then, students with learning disabilities need to spot the right opportunities and fight for better representation in HEIs in India.

Students with learning disabilities mostly take up visual communication and home science, but colleges should make other majors and disciplines accessible

The writer is a freelance journalist based in Mumbai and the founder of Bangalore Schools, a Facebook parent community.

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